

THE 1608/5470  
Lawful USE  
OF THE  
LAW.  
A  
SERMON  
ON  
1 TIMOTHY i. 8.

Preached at ABERDEEN the 3d Day  
of April 1735, that Week in which the  
PROVINCIAL SYNOD sat.

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By JOHN FORBES Minister of the Gospel at Deer.

*Published at the Desire of Ministers of great Value and  
Esteem who heard it.*

*With Additional Illustrations.*

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THE  
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OF THE

LAW

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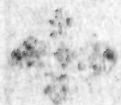
SERMON

ON

TIMOTHY 1.3

THE SERMON OF THE  
REV. JAMES WATSON, D.D.  
OF NEW YORK, PREACHED  
AT THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL  
IN NEW YORK, ON  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 1773.

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To the Honourable,

**JAMES ERSKINE**  
of Grange, Esq; &c.  
&c. &c.

**S I R,**



**W**HEN Men affirm *Truth*  
or oppose *Error* at the  
Press, it has been long  
since thought proper  
to do it under the Fa-  
vour of some able Friend to the  
*one*, and Adversary to the *other*: For  
a 2 which

which Reason, he most recommends himself to my Choice, as having a good Title to that Character, whose extraordinary Abilities natural and acquired have form'd him for ministering in the highest Offices of *State*, and whose Friendship to Truth has been testified by a most remarkable Improvement of his Occasions to promote the Good of the *Church*.

To you, *Sir*, this bright Character appertains, in you those great Conditions of my Choice are to be found.

And therefore, with a Pleasure proportioned to my high Esteem, I take this Opportunity so to acknowledge; begging Leave, *Sir*, while I publish these few Sheets, to assume the Honour, of being known to the Reader as under your Protection.

I own it, *Sir*, a great Ambition in  
me,

me, to do that which may bring a small Performance of mine under your Notice; your's, who have shined in all the high Stations wherein you have appeared, and magnified the great Offices you have been vested with, as being celebrated for the *Equity* of the *Bench*, and *Eloquence* of the *Bar*, and for all the great Abilities belonging to *both*; and who, as the fam'd Roman Senator, illustrious in History for having demitted his Interest or Authority in the Senate, that, for the Service of the Commonwealth, he might come to the Bar, have, *in like Manner*, pass'd from your Seat in one Court, where Statutes are only *applied*, to that supreme One, where Laws are *framed*: So that, Sir, your similar Practice, in several Views of it, has brightned the Memory, and revived the Honour of that noble Roman.

My Desire, Sir, in publishing this  
small



small Treatise, being that the Name which is above every Name may be remembered, by those particularly whose Office it is to bear his Name to the Gentiles, and that in Sermons it might be as Ointment poured forth, as it is in the sacred Text; I doubt not of your overlooking the Imperfections of this Essay, as being an intended Means for that great End.

Of this, Sir, I am the more perswaded, that with Pleasure I have listened, on some special Occasions well known to the Church, while you have expressed yourself zealously for the Honour of that worthy Name by which only we can be saved, and pled the Cause of Truth against every Proposition that had a heretical Sound, and especially such as could be taken in an Arian Sense: And having been Witness to the Testimony you have given to the Honour of the Son, in whom

whom the Father loves to be glorified, I find a repeated Satisfaction to narrate it, while I remember with what Brightness you displayed those extraordinary Talents for Him, which you received from Him.

How happy, how hopeful, and how delightful an Employment is it, to speak or write with a sincere Aim at the Honour of his blessed Name! seeing such may be sure of being accepted of Him, and confessed by Him, for his own Name and Righteousness Sake only, notwithstanding all the Imperfections of their Persons or Performances: And, in the Hope of *seeing his Face with Joy*, how cheerfully may a Man bear such Censures as are cast upon him in any such Attempts to do him Service?

I conclude, *Sir*, with a Pleasure to think, that, seeing the Church does miss

miss you in *one* Court, she finds you in *another*, which is superior: And I heartily wish, that Abundance of Grace may excite you to aim at the Lord's Glory, in seeking *Jerusalem's* Good, according to the Call of Providence, wheresoever you sit as Judge; and that at last you may shine in *imputed Righteousness*, when you stand in the Judgment, at the Appearance of the great and only Potentate, who in his Times is to shew himself KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. So prayeth,

SIR,

Your most humble, and

most affectionate Servant,

JOHN FORBES.





I TIM. i. 8.

*But we know that the Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully.*



**L**AWS in their Propriety being the Dictates of Justice, and Justice in its Perfection an Attribute of the supreme Lawgiver and impartial Judge ; it is a *fearful Thing* for guilty Men, who by breaking his Laws have incurred his Justice, *to fall into the Hands of the living God* : And seeing by the *Deeds of the Law no Flesh can be justified*, nor any other Way than by his Obedience unto Death who made Intercession for the Transgressors, it is therefore a guilty Thing for such who by Office are Ministers of the Gospel, to teach the Doctrine of the Law, without showing Men who is the *End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that beliveth*. This is Blood-guiltiness itself, a concealing the King's Remission from condemned Men, when 'tis given in Trust to be revealed ; as the Apostle says of the Gospel in the *xx. v.* calling it the *glorious Gospel of the blessed God* committed to his Trust.

So that to conceal the everlasting Righteousness now brought in, for which God justifies the Ungodly, is a

A

Kind

Kind of Treason against the great King, and in a Sort the Murdering of his Subjects.

And therefore, that *Timothy* might be free of the Blood of all Men, and innocent of so great a Transgression; that he might not imitate those criminal Teachers who delivered the Law in Neglect of the Gospel; he writes him as in the Context, and not only dissuades him from imitating so defective Patterns, but sets him also a bright Example of preaching the Gospel, that he might follow his Steps; as in the 15. v. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Jesus Christ came into the World, to save Sinners, of whom I am chief.*

But, that the Apostle's Doctrine might take the more readily with *Timothy* his own Son in the Faith, he first ascertains his Apostolical Authority from the Divinity of its Original in the Command of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ our Hope, as he expresses it; and, being warmed with the Mention of those dear and delightful Names and Titles, he salutes *Timothy* with Grace, Mercy and Peace, from the Pity of such a Father, the Bowels of such a Brother, and the Authority of such a Lord, their sure and allsufficient Help, as well as their common Hope.

Next, he reminds him, that as the Edification of the Church depended so much upon the Substance and Savour of the Gospel in Sermons, so he had besought him to abide some While at *Ephesus*, to enjoin some to preach no other Doctrine for Gospel than that which he had received of the Lord Jesus, and delivered unto them, and not to give Heed to *Fables* and *Genealogies* of such a Kind as could reach no profitable End to the Hearer, nor be finished by the Preacher.

But, as those Fables and unprofitable Traditions came short of Gospel-purposes, and could neither affect the Heart with Love to God or Man, but minister or occasion useless and unanswerable Questions instead of promoting Concord; so to obey the Command, and fulfil the Commission of preaching the Gospel purely, reaches

reaches the great End whereof those Vanities fell short ; seeing it both commands and tends to Love and Charity of the best Kind, and most commending Qualities, to wit, from a *sprinkled* or cleansed *Heart*, and a well-kept *Conscience*, in the Exercise of a sincere and saving Faith.

Wherefore the Apostle regretes that notwithstanding of the Truth of this, that the Law when Evangelically taught, or the Gospel as commanding Holiness and Morality from new Motives, and for another End than Justification, does tend to Love and Charity ; yet there were some who *turned aside to vain Talking and Jangling*, instead of preaching the Gospel ; and so, by disusing the proper Means, fell short of the End, and swerved from the Mark or Scope of the Preacher's Office.

The Reason of this Shortcoming he gives in the 7th Verse, which is, That they separated those Things which God hath joined, and taught the Law neglectfully of the Gospel ; by which sinful Neglect, and itchful Affectation, in Desire to be *Teachers of the Law*, they had not raised their intellectual Reputation, but were as contemptible as useless to their Hearers ; they neither made Men wiser nor better, because they *neither understood what they said, nor whercof they affirmed* ; that is, they neither understood their Subject, nor what they said on it.

But then says he, *Timothy*, not that I am speaking to the Prejudice of the Law, while I censure those irregular Preachers for their Neglect of the Gospel : For, on the contrary, both you and I, and all that are savingly enlightned, do know, and that experimentally, that *the Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully*.

Here we have, *First*, That whereof the Apostle affirms, or his present Subject ; and that is the *Divine Law*, called eminently *the Law*, because of its Excellency in Equity and Authority ; 'tis the supreme Law, the Touchstone Law.

I may not now insist upon the Variety of Acceptations



tions of this Word in Scripture; my Design is to discourse of it in some several Views, as distinguished from that which is most strictly and properly called *Gospel*.

*Secondly*, We have that which he says on his Subject, which is, *1st*, That *the Law is good*; this is the Character he gives it, the Property he acknowledges to belong to it, and whereof all other Laws should partake.

*2dly*, We have the Supposition on which we may expect the Benefit of its Quality, and that is, *if a Man use it lawfully*, then may we expect to find it good for us, as it is in itself, and for its proper Ends. Among the Nations there are Laws that regulate the Application and Use of Laws, and in this the supreme Law-giver hath set them an Example.

But this Supposition is not to be understood as if a good Law could become bad in itself, or as if the Nature of it were mutable; but that our Abuse of it may lose us the Benefit.

*3dly*, The Ground on which the Apostle and *Timothy*, and all believing Preachers and Hearers, can give the Law this Testimony, or say of it as in the Text; and that is personal Knowledge and Experience in a Variety of Respects: For Instance, as 'tis a *School-master*, to bring them to *Christ*; so the Consideration of the strict Holiness of the Precept, and the Dreadfulness of the Penalty, as also of their own Inability to obey the one, or endure the other, excites them, under Grace, to make much of *Christ* after they are come to him, as being the glorious and kind Friend who delivered them from the Wrath to come.

*4thly*, Comparing the 7th and 8th Verses of this Chapter together, we see the great Difference betwixt them and those deficient Preachers. They that desired to be *Teachers of the Law*, vainly pretended to Knowledge; but the Apostles and Evangelists really knew the Scriptures, and the Bliss of doing the Lord's Commandments. Those formerly mentioned, repeated the

Rab-

Rabbins Words, or studied a Conformity to their Doctrines whom they chose to imitate, little concerned for the Import or Tendency of them ; but these were taught by the Spirit, who gave them a saving Experience of the Truth. Those commented on the Law, and commended it ; thus they began, continued and concluded their Discourses ; But the Apostle not only called the Law *good*, but also said, there is a distinguishing Goodness in the Gospel, or Grace *worthy of all Acceptation*, in that faithful Saying, which is a Summary of the Gospel, even that *Christ came into the World to save Sinners*, as in the 15 Verse of this Chapter.

My Design generally is, 1<sup>st</sup>, To treat of that whereof the Apostle *affirms*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, To explain what he *says* on his Subject.

Or more particularly,

1. To consider what a Law is, and what is *the Law*, which in the Text is eminently so called.

2. To show that God's Law is *good*.

3. To discourse of the *Abuses* of it to be shunned, and *Uses* to be made, in order to reap the Benefit of its Quality, and find it good ourselves.

4. To view the Consequences of that whereof the Apostle is in the clear Knowledge, and so well convinced, *viz.* That *the Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully*.

*First*, As to *Laws* in general.

So essential is Law to Government, so necessary in Society, and so conducive to the Good of Mankind, that a Multitude of Authors, of different Stations, Principles and Professions, have employed themselves in defining Law, in classing Laws, in explaining the Sense of them, in showing the Extent, in viewing the Marches or Borders of Laws, in examining their Equity, disputing their Authority, vindicating their Character, and deducing the Consequences ; in showing to what Cases they are to be applied, and whose Causes they countenance.

The Moral Philosophers and Schoolmen, the Lawyers  
and

and Divines, are so various and frequent in their Definitions of a Law, as they have Occasion to treat of it; and some of them so exact in their Thoughts, and satisfying on the Subject, that One is left much at a Loss which to prefer: But the Number of those Definitions which could agree to my Purpose is the less, that many of those Authors do define a Law according to the Civil Constitution or Form of Government under which they lived, and from which their Laws respectively were to derive their Authority and Force.

My Design is to give a few of many, in the more abstracted and general Kind; and next, by comparing them together, to take Notice of the Requisites of a Law, or of that which belongs to its Nature and Constitution; and this may be of Use in the Sequel of the Discourse.

One calls Law, when taken for a Precept, "A rational Ordinance for the publick Good, made and published by those that have the Care of the Community."

Another describes it thus: "A Law is a common Precept, just and stable, and sufficiently published."

A third defines it, "A certain Rule of Life, prescribed by a supreme Governor to his Subjects, whereby to order their Actions to their own and the publick Welfare."

It is otherwise called, "A wholesom Mixture of that which is just and profitable, contained, to wit, in a Statute published by Authority as a Rule to its Subjects, or to Men in Society."

It is not necessary for me to determine which of these Accounts to prefer. My next Design is to search for the Requisites or proper Ingredients of a Law, among the Definitions compared together, that so I may show from the common Sentiments of Mankind as to the Nature of a Law in general, that the Divine Law is good, and deserves the Character which the Apostle gives it; seeing all that's good, in their Sense of Law, agrees to his Law in Perfection; For which



which Reason, human Laws cannot compare with it, but are infinitely exceeded by it.

From the Definitions they give of a Law abstractedly from the Form of any particular Government, it appears plain, that to the Being of wholesom Laws is required,

1<sup>st</sup>, JUSTICE. All Lawgivers do pretend to it, howsoever little their Laws may sometimes have of it. If a Law is not just, it is Iniquity; and Obedience to it would be unjust, and therefore undue: For no Man can be under a moral Obligation to commit Iniquity, because of the immutable and supreme Law of Righteousness. For which Reason, one of the ablest and most accurate Writers on Government that this Island can boast of, said, "That which is not just is not Law, and that which is not Law is not to be obeyed †."

2<sup>dly</sup>, As Law, properly speaking, is the Dictate or Voice of Justice; so it is requisite to the Being of a Law, that it be originate in AUTHORITY. An assumed Power is Usurpation, and the Exercise of it is Oppression. And as a Statute is not Law without Authority, so Authority extends no farther in the Exercise of it than Equity, whether one use it in making Laws, or in applying them to Cases when made.

3<sup>dly</sup>, GOODNESS is a special Property of a Law, in so much that it obtains for a Brocard or common Saying among all that mistake not the End of Government in relation to the Governed, "That the Safety of the People is the supreme Law; the End at which human Laws, subordinately to God's Glory, ought to be aimed; the Rule by which they are to be explained; and the Motive or Inducement from which they are to be applied." It is beyond all Doubt, that the Civil Magistrate is the *Minister of God to Men for Good*: So that Princes enjoy their Prerogatives for the Sake of the People's Privileges, as being Conservators of the same; they have their Honour, that their People may live safely under their Civil Administration; they receive their Power, that

the People may live under them *quiet and peaceable Lives.*

And, if the Civil Magistrate is the Minister of God to Men for Good, the Ministers of the Gospel are more especially such; so that, when they make Laws or Acts which do not tend to the People's Safety, or to the Edification of the Church, they are Sinners above others: Because, as their Office is specially institute for their Good, so 'tis for the Good of their Souls the better Part: And therefore, in making Ecclesiastick Laws, the Question is not, How such an Act or Law can please Politicians in the State? but, How it can please him that called Ministers to their Office, and how it can profit the People?

*4thly*, As Mens Actions or Acts cannot be form'd subordinately to their proper Ends without WISDOM, and as Justice has an Alliance to Prudence; so a Law cannot want a Share of this Virtue to complete its Value. And therefore they who in the Exercise of great Wisdom have fram'd Laws for a People's Welfare, have acquired *double Honour*, and their Merit in making such Laws has been often rewarded with Justice.

*5thly*, To give a Statute the Force and Effect of a Law, PUBLICATION is necessary, whether by Sound of Trumpet or otherwise; by such concomitant Solemnities as accord to the Custom and Constitution of the Country wherein the Law is to obtain, or have its Force. A secreted Statute is not Law. The Memory of *Caligula* continues branded for publishing his laws in so small Characters, and placing them so high, that they could but difficultly be read; and One of the *Norman* Race of Kings is charged with publishing his laws in a Language not familiar to his Subjects.

These then are the Properties of a Law; for, without lawful *Authority*, the Legislation cannot be just; without *Justice*, the Statute cannot be good for the Subjects; without *Goodness* in respect to them, it cannot be prudent or wise; without *Prudence*, it cannot in Wisdom be published; and without *Publication*, the

the Statute cannot pass into a Law. But, thus qualified, Law is good and impartial to the Subjects; it cannot be bribed, tho' a Judge may. In this Conviction, Men have painted Justice blind, and Law in purple Robes.

But, after all the highest Commendations of human Laws, they are but ministring and subservient to the eternal Law of Righteousness. The reasonable Service which Divine Sovereignty requires, admits not of absolute and implicate Obedience to human Laws; as implicate Faith is not due to Mens Doctrines, so neither is unlimited and implicate Obedience owing to their Laws. A fam'd Heathen Moralist is remarkable, saying, "That God is angry with them that counterfeited his Thunder and Lightning." He is not pleased with such as pretend to absolute Authority or Sovereignty, but with the Imitation of his Justice, Goodness and Mercy. And his Commandments are so exceeding broad, that, were Men sharp enough sighted to compare their Circumstances with the Divine Statutes, they might see the Extent thereof regulating their Actions in every Condition of Life, or directing them in relation to all the Ingredients of their Lot: So that human Laws, when just, are no other than such as Lawiers call declaratory Laws; which are not new Laws, but declarative of what was Law.

For which Reason, God's Law is called in my Text *the Law*; it is Law eminently, in respect of its absolute Authority and singular Extent, *Psal. cxix. 96.* In which two Views we may say, that besides it there is no Law.

My Design is, 1<sup>st</sup>, To consider the Moral Law as good; or, as we may call it, his Common Law, to which *Jews* and *Gentiles* are subjected.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Those statutory and positive Laws, by which the Nation of the *Jews* was once distinctively governed, whether as called *Ceremonial*, or *Judicial*, in so far as was peculiar to their then Establishment.

3<sup>dly</sup>, Those special and later Laws by which the New-Testament Church is governed, of which the



Apostle says to the *Hebrews*, Chap. vii. 12. That *where the Priesthood is changed, there is also a Change of the Law.*

In all which Instances, the Character given in the Text is applicable, and it may be said, *The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully.* 'Tis good in the several Kinds, good intrinsically, or for the Ends of the Legislation.

The Moral Law seems principally intended in the Text; for 'tis immediately added, That *the Law was not made for a righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners.*—— That is, the Penalty is not laid or levelled against a righteous Man, not applicable to him; for a Man is punished as a Transgressor. I begin with the Law in this Sense or Kind of it.

In so far as the Impressions of its Equity and Authority do yet remain on the Mind since they were first given, 'tis called the *Law of Nature*, or may be so denominated, *Rom. ii. 14, 15.* as it was delivered with the concomitant Terrors of Fire and Thunder on Mount *Sinai*, 'tis called a *fiery Law*; as 'tis written in the Scriptures, and held out as a Lamp unto Mens Feet, and a Light to their Paths, 'tis called the *Moral Law*; as 'tis expressive of the Divine Holiness of its Author, and hath Properties not applicable to human Laws, 'tis a *perfect Law*; as it excels them in Authority, takes Place of them, and is to be obeyed before them, 'tis the *Royal Law*. 'Tis a Light or Lamp to direct one in the Way, 'tis a Bridle to restrain from wandering, 'tis a Glass wherein a Man may see his Moral Actions condemned or approved.

This Law is good in itself, good for the Ends of Government, and good for the Governed, *if a Man use it lawfully.* 'Tis good as dictated by Justice, and as expressive of unspotted Holiness. 'Tis good as founded in Reason, and as promoting Religion. 'Tis good in the Precept, for 'tis *holy*; 'tis good in the Annexation of a Penalty, for 'tis *just*, and tends as a Mean to keep the Subjects in the Way of the Precept. 'Tis good

good for Men considered singly, for it directs them to live *soberly*; 'tis good for them considered socially, for it teaches them to live *righteously*; 'tis good for them considered subordinately in both Views, for it teaches them to live to God's Glory. 'Tis good as delivered by *Moses* a typical Mediator, after such a Manner as might tend to convince the Subjects of their Need of the *Messiah*, and raise their Desire, or excite their Longing for him. 'Tis good and gladdening as explained and enjoined by Jesus Christ to be obeyed, not simply as a Rule of Moral Life, but in Gratitude to him for such matchless Love, in fulfilling all Righteousness for us, and delivering us from so great a Death as we had deserved. 'Tis good as it was delivered by *Moses* of old, and as reinforced by new Motives in the Gospel of late.

This Law is *good*, as having the needful Properties of a Law to Perfection. 'Tis of rightful and sovereign Authority, for *God spake all these Words*. 'Tis *holy*, as commanding Men to be holy, and to imitate the great Pattern of Holiness in his own Perfection. 'Tis *just*; for he is altogether free from Unrighteousness, *a God of Truth, and without Iniquity*. 'Tis given in Wisdom, for his *Understanding is infinite*: It may be said of his Laws, which are the Acts of his Authority, as 'tis said of the Effects of his Almsufficiency or Omnipotence, *In Wisdom hath he made them all*. And 'tis sufficiently promulgate or published; *He made known his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments to Israel*. They were published with the Sound of Trumpet, the Voice of Thunder, and Terrors of Fire, infomuch that *Moses* himself said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*. The Law was also writ or engraven on Stone; yea, the Impressions of its Justice and Authority do yet in Part remain on the Mind of Man, in which Sense a Man is *a Law to himself*, and *his own Conscience bears him Witness*. Thus is it even in the stony Heart, and before a saving Change, tho' it cannot receive the Truth in Love, nor does it like to retain the Knowledge of God: But 'tis written in the

Heart of Flesh of Consent ; for the new Man *delights in the Law of the Lord with his Inwards*, Rom. vii.

22. 'Tis written there as in a living Register, and the enlivened Man loves to read the Record.

But the Precepts of the Law, together with the Gospel-report, are more legibly recorded in the Scriptures, eminently so called : And as the Moral Law was read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day to the *Jews*, so is it published in the New-Testament Church to the *Gentiles*, and *great is the Company of them that have published it*. No King can promulgate his Laws after such a Manner, and by such Numbers as the King of Kings can ; *their Words are gone to the End of the World*.

To which Considerations I add, That the Law is good, as 'tis pleasant to the sanctified Mind, or to the Believer's Taste, on a Variety of Accounts, as the Psalmist sets forth in the Current of the cxix. *Psalm* ; and the like Sentiments and Sensations, so to speak, has the Apostle of it in the vii. Chapter to the *Romans*. It tastes as *Hony* to the Saints, as 'tis given by the Hand of a Mediator, as favouring of his Holiness, as tending to his Honour, as being the Way which leads to his House, the Place where the Master dwelleth ; as being the Will of the Father, as fulfilled by the Son, and as having been dictated by the holy Spirit.

'Tis not only good as pleasant to Believers, but good as profitable to Men, tho' Men are altogether unprofitable Servants to God.

The Obedience of Faith not only turns to a good Account against the Evening of a Man's Day ; for then the Master says, *Go call the Labourers and give them their Hire*, Matth. xx. 8. all being only of Grace, and nothing in Payment of a Debt that they have to expect ; but also, through all the Hours of a Man's Day on Earth, this Obedience is wholesom, and Disobedience is hurtful and injurious, in the several Respects wherein a Man is capable of being profited, or sustaining



staining Damage; that is, in his Soul and Body, his Name and Reputation, his outward-Condition, and in his Relation others.

1<sup>st</sup>, In his Soul. A Man's own *Conscience* or Thoughts do accuse or excuse him; So that, to show that the Law is good, it may be proper to consider the Effects of Obedience and Disobedience in the Human Faculties or Powers of the Mind. The Conscience accuseth, even bad Men, upon gross Breaches of the Law, and good Men after Transgressions comparatively small. An awakned Conscience, O how woful! It burns like a Fire, it rages like a Sea, it stings like a Serpent, it pierces as a Sword, it torments like Oil in the Bones, than which, Naturalists say, nothing is more intolerable.

In this Case, the *Memory* torments the Man with a Retrospect or Review of Sin committed, Guilt contracted, the Loss sustained, and Judgment as threatened; a Man's Thoughts torment him in Meditation of Prosperity as ended, Adversity as begun, and the Provocations that made the Change.

Sin beclouds the *Judgment*, darkens the Understanding, tends to the weakning of Faith in Believers, and makes a doubtful Mind.

Disobedience, by its Influence, renders the *Will* vague and vacillant; the Man by it is brought to his Wits End, and reduced to Extremities, so that he knows not what to do, nor whither to go.

It makes unnatural and alienated *Affections*: It loses him the Delight of the pleasing Affections, such as *Love* and *Joy*; and excites the paining Passions, such as the Recoils of *Fear*, a Load or Burden of *Grief*, Clouds of *Shame*, the Convulsions of *Horror*, the Tossings of *Suspicion*, the Eruptions of *Discontent*.

The *Imagination* itself concurs with the other Powers to make a Man sensible that Sin is an *evil Thing and a bitter*; it anticipates the Judgment to come, and presentiates the Punishment: In its Manner, it ends Time, and begins the Miseries of another World,

World, and in a Sort gives unto temporal Evils the Sting of *Eternity*.

On the other Hand, the Obedience of Faith is attended with Serenity of Mind, Fixedness of Resolution, a Feast in the Conscience, a Jubilee in the Heart, and a Kind of inward Heaven. *To be spiritually minded is Life and Peace.*

To conclude this, A Man cannot be without Consciouness or Conscience. *Conscience* has a native Capacity of discerning betwixt Moral Good and Evil; this Capacity is accompany'd with a Power of concluding for us or against us; and such Conclusions cannot be without Pleasure or Pain in Proportion to Convictions of Guilt, or a Care to keep the Conscience void of Offence.

2dly, He who formed the *golden Bowl*, and twisted the *silver Cord*, who is the admirable Author of the animal OEconomy, as Former of our Bodies as well as Father of our Spirits, and hath *fearfully and wonderfully made* us in the Union of both, gave Laws to Man good and wholesom, for the visible as well as invisible Part; so that Obedience is the best Receipt the Physician can give, because 'tis evident in many Instances that moral Corruption introduces bodily Corruption and Diseases as the natural Cause. And as it is so at first, so is it the Cause of their Strength and Continuance; insomuch that the Physician must in many Cases recommend the Moral Law to his Patient, or comprehend a Part of it in his *Receipt*, and tell him, that without Temperance, for Instance, the Medicines can take no Effect; or advise that the Exercise of the paining, or the Excess of the pleasing Passions, would withstand their Efficacy and Operation.

Thus are we taught by the wise King *Solomon*, who well knew what was wholesom, not only for a State or Kingdom, but also for his individual Subjects, and could write or direct as a Physician, as well as dictate or command like a King, *Prov. xiv. 30. A sound Heart is the Life of the Flesh, but Envy the Rottenness of the Bones.* These are strong Ex-  
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pressions to my Purpose, *Prov. iii. 7, 8.*— *Fear the Lord and depart from Evil: It shall be Health to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones.*

Physicians, as well as Divines, do acknowledge, that no Man is in perfect Health, but so far as a mortal Body can have it, Morality, particularly Temperance, contributes to it: It has a benign Influence upon an Equality of the Motion or Circulation of the Blood, an Easiness and Freedom in Respiration or Breathing; it contributes to the Continuance of the Strength and Sense of the Nerves, the Activity and Force of the Muscles, the Purity of the Blood, and Marrow of the Bones. Thus also, by taking Heed to the Divine Law, those Diseases are in Part prevented, which are the Effect of the Exercise of some Passions that are forbidden, and of the Excess of other Affections which in Measure are allowed. Thus also the Register of the Memory is kept clean and clear; thus the Seat of Ideas, the Scene of Imagination sound and safe.

But, on the contrary, the breaking of God's Law hastens the breaking of the golden Bowl, and the loosing of the silver Cord. Disobedience tends to corrupt the Fluids or Juices, and to dry and weaken the Solids of the Body; and oftentimes the bad Complexion and sickly Constitution of the Child is a Symptom or Sign of the Sin of the Parents; not only of the Sin of our first Parents, and that which is the Child's by Imputation, but of the immediate Parents, by aggravated Commissions or their Sins of heinous Aggravations. The Antients themselves imputed their Diseases to the Anger of the gods, as they expressed it, in relation to the procuring Cause; and Scripture, with many Instances and long Experience, has taught, that those bodily Ailments do natively arise from the moral Corruption that is in Man.

3dly, The Law is good for the Reputation; or, it makes a good Name, by directing Men to be good, and to do Good; and others to *honour them that fear the Lord*. And those Things which the Law commands are among Men of good Report, as consonant to Reason,



son, and belonging to true Religion; as tending to the Good of Men, as well as to the Glory of God. And those Things which are committed by Men against the Dignity of the Divine Nature, are reputed against the Decency of the human Nature, insomuch that Sin and Shame are inseparately joined; and it is no Wonder that Sin, which is a Rebellion against God, and a Ruin to the Sinner, become a Reproach to Men: And hence it is that he who came to endure the Cross for us, had the Shame also to despise, and so, by taking away the Elect's Sin, took away their Reproach.

I said, The Law is good to the Obedient for their Reputation. A *patient Continuance in Well-doing* issues in *Glory and Honour*, and the *Immortality* thereof in *eternal Life*, Rom. ii. 7. *The Memory of the Righteous is blessed*, and that of the *Wicked* doth *rot*; the Conversation of the one is as Salt and savoury, the Communication of the other corrupteth; the one is as a Dew from the Lord, the other withereth above Ground.

Because Obedience to God's Law is accompanied with Honour, therefore, when either a Church or State use not their Authority agreeably to the Law and Testimony, and their Subjection to its Author, but make Laws inconsistent therewith, and emit contrary Edicts, Disobedience is then no Brand or Reproach; but the Reputation of such who chuse to *obey God rather than Men*, survives the unjust Law which they have disobeyed: Their Reputation doth rise and stand, when it is brought down and fallen by a Repeal, as in the Case of the three Children recorded in the 3d of *Daniel*, and as in later Instances has been observed.

4thly, The Law is good for One in his outward Estate and Condition. It teaches Diligence, and the Hand of the Diligent maketh rich; it directs when to keep, and when to cast away; it teaches when and how to do Good to others: And, in this Instance, to obey the Precept, has a *great Recompence of a free Reward*, Prov. xi. 25. Isa. xxxii. 8. Gal. vi. 10. *As ye have Opportunity do Good unto all Men, especially unto them who are of*  
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*the Household of Faith.* Compared with *Mark ix. 41.* *Whoſoever ſhall give you a Cup of Water to drink in my Name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt, verily I ſay unto you, He ſhall not loſe his Reward.* It fixes the Bounds betwixt Parſimony and Prodigality, and ſo provides for the Supply of one, and the Safety of another; it commands Peace, and, by living in Peace, a Man ſhuns the Expence of War; it enjoins Moderation, and ſo a Man is freed from the Expence of Exceſs; it dictates Juſtice, and ſo encourages Commerce; it commands Charity, and ſo provides for the Relief of one, and excites the Gratitude and good Wiſhes of another; it forbids to wrong or hurt a Neighbour, and ſo prevents the Expence of Redreſs and Reparation; it prohibits Theft, Circumvention, Uſury, Extortion, Breach of Truſt, and all Kinds of defrauding or wronging others in outward Things, and ſo prevents the Difficulties of Reſtitution.

*ſtly,* 'Tis good for Men in their Relation to one another, whether natural, civil, or ſacred; as commanding that Honour which is due from one in a Dependence upon another, Love of Likeneſs and mutual relation, Condeſcenſion to Inferiors or them of low Eſtate, Juſtice in Tranſactions, Faithfulneſs in Truſt and Contracts, Gratitude to Benefactors, Conſtancy and Firmneſs in Friendſhip, Remiſſion of private Offences, the rewarding of Virtue and Punishment of Vice, Sympathy with the Afflicted, Congratulance with the Eſcaped or Joyful, Mercy to the Miſerable, Charity to the Poor, Hoſpitality to Strangers, Humanity and Goodneſs to all Men, a diſtinguiſhing Love to ſpiritual Likeneſs, Harmony in Holineſs, Concord in holy Convocations for God's Honour: By his Law Superiors are entitled to Honour, Inferiors to Protection, Equals to mutual Reſpect; the King's juſt Prerogative is guarded, and the Peoples Privileges fenced or protected; *breaking in* is forbidden upon the one Part, and *breaking out* upon the other.

But, to finiſh its Character as I can here give it, this Law is good even to Perfection. A Property  
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not agreeing to any human Laws, *Psal. xix. 7, 8, 9.* — nothing therein is defective, nothing redundant: And therefore, when *Malachi* concludes his Prophecies, and says, *Remember the Law of Moses*, he denounces terrible Threatnings against them that should add or take away.

If we view human Authority as exercised among the Nations, in Laws Civil or Ecclesiastick, we find some of them are dark and obscure, others foolish and frivolous; some of them unjust; some of them even cruel; some of them incroach unduly upon Liberty, others of them are injurious to Men in their Property; some of them annex a Reward to Iniquity, others contain a Penalty against Virtue. All the Wisdom and Equity of antient *Rome*, the Knowledge and Solitude of *Athens*, the Vigilance of *Sparta*, the Abilities of *Numa*, *Solon* or *Lycurgus*, could never frame a Law worthy of that Character, or having this Property of Perfection; but God's Law is *perfect*, and *makes wise the Simple*. This is its Prerogative, or a Property peculiar: And, as his Law is perfect, so 'tis perpetual or lasting. Among Men, as subject to human Laws, a posterior Law derogates from a prior; One Day a Law is made, another Day, or within a short Time, 'tis sopited; again 'tis revived, at last 'tis repealed or abrogated. One Monarchy repealed the Laws of another: The Laws of the *Medes* took Place of the *Assyrian*, and were peremptory and positive to a Proverb; but, as peremptory as the *Persian* Authority was, it was broken and brought down by the fam'd *Macedonian*. In Process of Time, the Reputation of the *Roman* Laws extended farther than the Authority and Positiveness of the *Persian* Statutes had done; but none of them all were ever universally received, nor lasting in their Authority or Force: It is peculiar to the King of Kings to be *without Beginning of Days, and without End of his Reign: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom from Generation to Generation.*

As the Moral Law is good in the Register or  
Scriptures,



Scriptures, so is it wheresoever 'tis transcribed in Substance among the Nations, and taken into the Body of their Civil or Municipal Laws: As the Moral Law is good, so are those Laws which are fram'd in Conformity to it, or in Consequence of it: And, when Municipal Laws are such, how great Iniquity is it, if Judges do not form their Decisions upon them, or in Conformity to them? Great Honour is to be done to the Divine Law, both in making and applying human Laws to Mens Actions. A Nation's Honour and Prosperity rises or falls according to the Measure or Degree to which this is done, or left undone and neglected. *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People*, especially when bad Laws are made, or Decisions form'd upon them. *Righteousness* in the Legislature and Administration makes them shine, and *Iniquity* therein exposes them to Shame.

The *Jewish* Rabbins are said so to have esteemed the Law, as to keep a Note of all the Letters in it; and to use this Saying, *There is not in the Law no not one Letter on which hang not great Mountains*.

The *Romans* are observed to have form'd many of their Laws in so great Conformity to Justice, that their Reputation has gone farther for that Reason, than the Force of their Arms ever could: But the Iniquity of the Administration did gradually expose their Constitution.

The *Saxons* are said to have asserted by their Law most of the Precepts of the Moral Law, acknowledging its Equity, confessing its Authority. But God wants not a Testimony from Men. As his Authority makes Laws, so his Truth affirms them. His Authority makes them supreme, his Holiness makes them just, his Goodness makes them wholsom, his Truth affirms them righteous.

The Value he has for his own Law, he hath expressed by the careful Manner wherein he has preserved it; the Judgments inflicted for the breaking of it, the Prohibitions of taking from it, or adding to it, and  
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especially by sending his own Son to fulfil it, who' by so doing *magnified the Law and made it honourable.*

As to the Manner wherein he has preserved it, it was engraven on Stone, to express its Value; for, in Scripture-stile, that which is valuable is said to be worthy of such a Register, *Job xix. 24.* It was laid in the Ark, to be kept therein till the Lord, whom the Old-Teltament Believers sought, should come into his Temple, and deliver it with his own Hand and from his own Mouth to the Disciples from Mount Zion, as *Moses* had done from Mount *Sinai.* When it was given by the Hand of a Mediator, he urg'd it with new Motives, in a most familiar and alluring Manner; and then was it put into so many Hands, yea, written in so many Hearts, by the Spirit, who gave them to receive it in the Love thereof, that it could not be cancell'd by whatsoever Means malicious Men could devise. The harmonious Care of Believers has been a Means of guarding the Register against that Corruption which has affected other Writings. The Law was put into so many Hands, and written in so many Hearts, that all the Rage of the Heathen could neither corrupt the Register, nor cancel it. Common Registers have been lost, some by Fire, some by Water; some intentionally, some accidentally torn, some consumed by Time: And, as to Human Laws, some have been repealed, some have first fallen into Desuetude, and next into Oblivion; but *the Word of the Lord abideth for ever,* 1 Pet. i. 23.

*Secondly,* I propos'd to treat of those statutory and positive Laws by which the *Jews* were once peculiarly governed, comprehended in that Typical Institution and OEconomy, which was to continue as a Star in the East, till the Sun of Righteousness should arise.

Albeit the Ceremonial Law is now fulfilled, and ceases to bind since the Fulfilment, altho' the statutory Part does not affect us obligatorily, yet it is not fallen absolutely into Desuetude; a Man may use it lawfully,

as serving for *Doctrine and Instruction in Righteousness*, that Righteousness by which it was fulfilled, and to which it pointed: For, as the Shadows serve to set off the Light, and as the Moon and Stars comparatively considered do serve to affect us with a livelier Sense of the superior Brightness and Beauties of the Day; so the Doctrine of the Ceremonial Law contributes to convince us of our Need, excite our Esteem, and enliven our Meditation of the Gospel and its Glory: *For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did: By the which, says the Apostle, we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 19.*

Particularly, this Law is of great Use to show, 1<sup>st</sup>, The Evil of Sin, as making Men so guilty and polluted themselves, so infectious to others, so enslaved to Enemies, and at last shut up in Prison, and excluded from the Common-wealth of *Israel* in the other World. To this Purpose do concur the Laws enjoining so frequent Washings, and so many Sacrifices; the Laws declaring him unclean who had but touched a Thing that had been used by an unclean Person; the Laws concerning Servitudes among the *Jews*; the Laws which shut up the Unclean, or excluded them the Camp; and all those Laws which provided such Penalties for transgressing the Ceremonial Precepts.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The Ceremonial Law is of great Use and Good, to set forth the Merit, Excellency and Alfsufficiency of the *Messiah*, the Saviour, as a Person able to fulfil so many Types, as sufficient for such a Multitude of Transgressors, and to expiate so many Transgressions; as satisfying so strict Justice, as having such perfect Holiness as could answer that End; as being so beautiful to the Eye of Faith, as all the Typical Lustre and Splendor of Persons and Things under the Law did exhibite him to be; as sounding such glad Tidings in the Ear, and giving such Joy to the Heart, as had been typified by the Jubilee, in the Assurance thus given of Remission to the Guilty, Relaxation to the Bound, and Restoration to the Forfeited, by *Shiloh's* Coming.

And further, his Excellency and Merit are by the  
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Ceremonial Law set forth, exhibiting him as One who could found such a lively Hope as was excited or raised by the Law of Liberation on the Death of the High Priest ; as a Physician who could recover the Sick to so perfect Health, as was notified by the Permission granted to return to the Camp after a While's Separation, or to show themselves again after they had been shut up as Lepers ; And further, as being so safe a Hiding-place, according to the Laws of Refuge, as so satisfying to the Desires, and so sufficient for the Necessities of the Refugees, agreeably to the Laws making Provision for them in the Places whither they fled, and to the Laws for such delicate Fare for the Guests in *the Heights of Zion*, at the solemn Feasts, *Jer. xxxi.*

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The Ceremonial Law was good for all the Ends for which it was given, and may yet be profitably used by the Preacher for those Ends of Illustration and Exhibition, in setting forth and commending Christ as the Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, as being *the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*. And how blisful a Thing is it to the Believer's Ear, how delightful to his Heart, to hear Christ crucified commended, by comparing the *Law* which was given by Moses, with the *Grace and Truth* that came by *Jesus Christ* ; and by showing the Relation of those Shadows unto him the *Body* ! Thus Admiration is raised, thus the Understanding is enlightened, thus the Affections are quickened, thus the Conscience is calmed, the Heart comforted, Fears do flee, and Faith and Hope are by the Influence of the Spirit fixed or established.

This is to evangelize the Law, this is to preach the Gospel, when the Preacher thus shows that all Things written by *Moses*, and the other Prophets, and in the *Psalms*, concerning him, are fulfilled in and by him.

By the Types, and lively or strong Figures appointed by this Law, was signified, That the atoning Blood would be precious, that the Gospel and its Ordinances,

dinances, and the several Means institute for applying that precious Blood, are pure. This was signified by the Use of Cedar-wood and Hyssop, in sprinkling the Blood of the Sacrifices upon the Unclean; for Cedar-wood long resists Putrification, and Hyssop is a cleansing or purifying Herb, and used both outwardly and inwardly for that Effect upon the Body.

To conclude this Head, In the Glass of this Law, and the Explications thereof in the Prophets, but especially by reading the Law in New-Testament Light, we see, That the Intercession of a High Priest was necessary; and that of *such a High Priest* as we have, who, says the Apostle, *became us*; That the Office is honourable and glorious; That the Undertaking was voluntary and gracious; That the Discharge of that Office is efficacious; That his Unction or Anointment is extraordinary and reviving; That his Sacrifice is savoury and acceptable; That his Death was timely; That the Destination was early; That the salutary Effects are endless, and that his Resurrection for these Ends would be glorious.

But altho' this Law is good for Contemplation and Meditation, yea, for exhibiting the rich Mysteries thereby signified, and exciting Men to accept the Offers; altho' it was good to raise the Expectation, and strengthen the Hopes of a Messiah's Coming, and is now to be used in Comparison with the Gospel-report, to prove that Jesus of *Nazareth* is he; yet it is no longer in Force as a Law: The Law is so fulfilled in Christ, and by him, as that he who *believeth in Jesus* is justified from all Things by which he could not by the Law of Moses; and of the Law in all Latitude it may be said, and joyfully believed, That Christ is the End of it for Righteousness to every one that believeth.

The very Alteration now observed, in the Produce of *Palestine*, seems to say that the Messiah is come to fulfil the Types. A late learned Historian \* takes Notice that there is now no such Balm in *Gilead* as formerly. The Alteration among the Vegetables there,

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and their Produce, seems to say, *That Truth has now sprung out of the Earth, and Righteousness has look'd down from Heaven; That the Branch of Righteousness is grown up unto David, and that the great Things promised in the Messiah's Coming, and exhibited by a Variety of Types and Emblems, are now fulfilled: And his Increase seems providentially signified by these their Decrease, when we compare the Word with Providence.*

3dly, *The Judicial Law is good if used lawfully; those Laws, I mean, whereby the Jews were peculiarly governed, and directed in judicial Decisions: From it the Preacher has Means and Arguments furnished him, whereby to illustrate the Guiltiness of Men as Pannels to Justice, the Impartiality of the Judge, and our Need of an Advocate. The Executors of the Law were forbidden to spare the Criminal when inflicting the Penalty; and all their Judges were often and strictly enjoind to do Justice impartially, without Respect of Persons.*

But those special Statutes of the judicial Kind, whereby the Jews were peculiarly governed, having now reached the End of the Legislation, by being for some Time in Force, do not obligatorily affect us, to whom *God hath spoken in these last Days by his Son; who, by his Obedience unto Death, hath fulfilled the typical Meaning of those Laws which related to that Mystery, such as that which made necessary the Residence of the Refugees in the several Cities whither they had fled, till the Death of the High Priest.*

I propos'd in the last Place to treat a little of those later Laws which relate to the OEconomy and Order of the New-Testament Church, which took place and obtained when the Priesthood was changed: To these the Apostle refers, *Heb. vii. 12.* when he says, — *The Priesthood being changed, there is made of Necessity a Change also of the Law.*

In the old Law, no Pin was to be put in the Tabernacle but according to the Pattern given in the Mount; and I observe, that this Law is not simply said to be  
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abrogated, but abrogated by a Change, or by new Regulations ; so that we are directed to search for the new Laws in the New Testament, with Assurance of finding them, and not to say that the Government is now left ambulatory. Jesus Christ is the Author of Order, and the new Covenant is said to be *ordered in all Things* : The first and last Dispensations of it are answerable to this Character. We are clearly taught, That the Government of the New-Testament Church is not to be modeled and changed to please the Taste, or imitate the Pattern of the *Gentile* Powers and Principalities, *Matth. xx. 25, 26, 27.* And it cannot be denied, but Patronages, in the Civil Sense of the Word, or in the Civil Law, did then obtain and were in Use among the *Gentiles* ; yea, these *Jews*, to whom the Lord was then speaking, were subject at the same Time to the Authority of the *Roman* Law, which contains the Statutes of Patronage, or Power of Patrons, in the Use whereof they were peremptory and precise, according to that natural Bent of Mens Will to exert Authority or demand a Privilege, which has often discovered itself since, in the Application of a patronizing Power to very disagreeable Purposes.

To these Considerations I add, That the Apostle *Paul*, writing to *Timothy*, 1 Epist. iii. 15. says expressly, That he does so, to the End *that Timothy might know how to behave himself in the House of God* ; and that the Holy Spirit's Design in dictating the Scriptures is, to *make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good Word and Work*, 2 Tim. iii. 14. It is a great Trespas then against this Law, to call it defective in any Instance or Article of OEconomy, necessary to the Ends of Government ; particularly with respect to the Manner of a Man's Entrance into the Pastoral Office : In which Case, 'tis evident from the x. of *Job*. that the Lord's Will is, that Intrants be so cautious, and the Church so free ; free to follow those Shepherds whose Words are the likeliest Echo of Christ's Voice. And, if any interfering Power or Law of Man be interposed, 'tis evi-

dent that it cannot be used lawfully, and therefore ought to undergo a Repeal; for, in such Cases, it becomes morally impracticable for the Church to serve two Masters: And, without all Contradiction, 'tis neither the Wisdom nor Safety of any State or Civil Power to compete it with Him, to whom *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given.*

Because of the great Extent of his Authority, it is necessary for them, whom the Holy Ghost has given to the Church for Overseers, when making declaratory Laws for maintaining the Order, and promoting the Interests of his House, to take diligent Heed, that these be subservient to his Honour, and conformable to his revealed Will, as notified in the New Testament, *where*, under Direction of the Spirit of Wisdom, and Revelation, they cannot miss it; particularly in relation to the Admission of those who are to take Part with them in the same Ministry, and to feed the Flock which God hath purchased with his own Blood.

I have noticed already, that the Use and End of a declaratory Law is, to declare the Sense, and notify the Consequences of a former Law: So that, in making an Ecclesiastick Act, the Question is not, What can please a Minister of State? but, What can please him who is Head of the Body the Church, and hath chosen his Ministers to be Soldiers? *2 Tim. ii. 4.* And, if they please him, they need not fear the Wrath of Man, the Remainder whereof he can restrain: For *God the Lord is a Sun and Shield*; they who follow him, or walk in his Steps, need not wander for want of Light, nor hide for Fear in the Day; yea, *When a Man's Ways please the Lord, he often makes his Enemies be at Peace with him*, Prov. xvi. 7. And the same is applicable to a Church or Nation.

If human Laws be declarative of that which is Divine Law, they cannot want the Properties of a good Law. And, to apply these to the present Case, should the Wisdom of the Church think fit to substitute an Act on the foresaid Subject, in Place of a former and late one, which could only be lawfully used, as it was by

by a Repeal, then such a new Ecclesiastick Law needs be just; just betwixt the Ministers and the People, just betwixt one Part of a People and another Part of them, in Cases wherein their Inclinations do differ; and just betwixt one Congregation and another: For a Law is not just if it extend not its Equity to all who are subjected to its Authority, without Respect of Persons.

2dly, Care needs to be taken that it be good, and that it be subservient to the spiritual Interests of the People: For, if the Safety of the People be considered in all well-governed Nations, as being subordinately to God's Glory, the prime Law, when they frame Civil Laws, much more need Men do so in making Ecclesiastick Statutes, which respect Mens Interests in view of another World, and in a Kingdom which is *not of this World*: And, seeing the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom have a Law of Liberty given them, which 'tis their Interest chearfully to obey, *Gal. v. 1. Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,*—— it becomes all Ecclesiastick Rulers to form their Acts consonantly to the Interest and Rights which his People have by that Law; and neither to intangle themselves, nor those under their Oversight, by any Act not favouring of spiritual Liberty and Love to Souls.

3dly, How needful is it, that it be conceived prudently, in Subordination to the great End of Edification? which can neither be attained nor expected by lodging any Power, prejudicial to the Peoples spiritual Interests, in the Hands of those who are their Adversaries by Principle. How watchful are the faithful Ministers of any State, that the Power of Civil and Publick Elections come not into the Hands of those who by Principle are inclined to subvert the Constitution? And, if a Gospel-Ministry are not careful to avoid the like Danger in the Discharge of their Office to the Church, they become justly suspected of seeking something else than *Jerusalem's Good*.

May the Wisdom that is from above, direct this National Church to an Act on this Head, or of this



Title I now treat of, such as by the making thereof the Lord Jesus may be glorified, and by executing the same the Church may be edified.

I have now shewn what a *Law* is, and that God's Law is *good*. My next Design was, To treat of the *Abuses* to be shunned, and *Uses* to be made of his Law, in order to reap the Benefit of its Quality. 'Tis mentioned with great Honour, because of its Holiness; and called *good*, notourly *good*, eminently *good*, when compared with any human Law; so that it is a criminal Action to make a bad Use of so good a Thing.

I have already adverted, that there is nothing in the Text to be understood, as if good Laws could be changed in their Nature, by the Iniquity of perverse Judges, the Disobedience of Subjects, or the Ignorance and Error of those who apply the Law; but that which is good of itself, may be bad to us, not in the Nature of the Thing, but through our own Default, when 'tis not used lawfully, as when a Man breaks the Law, or abuses it: And, in the Text, an Abuse of the Law is held a Breach of the Law, which lays a Man open to the Penalty, or makes him obnoxious to Punishment.

In order therefore to explain the Supposition, or illustrate the Caution contained in the Text; my Purpose is, to apply it to a Man in some several Views of a moral Life.

*The Law then is good, if a Man use it lawfully, as an Interpreter or Preacher, as a Subject or Hearer, as a Party to a Cause, as an Advocate for his Client; and as a Judge on the Bench.*

*If he use it lawfully*, in explaining the Precept, in applying it doctrinally to Purposes, in obeying the Statute, in urging the Performance, in pleading for Parties, in exacting the Penalty.

*1st, If he use it lawfully*, as an Interpreter or Preacher; If he lean not to his own Understanding, nor depend on the Judgment of his Fellow-interpreters; If he enquire the Prince concerning the Meaning of his own Law; If he consult an Interpreter, One among a  
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*thousand, who is Immanuel, God with us.* In some Cases, antiently the Subjects had Recourse to the Sovereign Power for the Sense of Law, or to obtain an Interpretation; and, if they did so concerning human Statutes, How much Need have the Interpreters of the Divine Law to cry, *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may see Wonders in thy Law?*—

But, to proceed with the Illustration, *If he use it lawfully* as an Interpreter, that is, if he search the Scriptures, and compare them, as did the *Bereans*; if he shew the Extent and exceeding Breadth of God's Law, that it reaches to the *Thoughts and Imaginations of Man's Heart*; if he aim at convincing his Hearer, that his carnal Heart can never conform to God's Law, nor, without a regenerating Change, be reconciled to it; That a new Heart he must have, and that such is the Gift of free Grace.

If the Interpreter aim at pointing accurately to the Marches or Limits of Laws in relation to one another; if he inroach not by his Explication of one Law upon the Bounds of another, or explain not one Law to the Prejudice of another.

If he direct his Hearer to him *who is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*: If he show the Use of the Law in respect to the Gospel and the Author of both, even that it is a Schoolmaster to bring Men to Christ, as it convinces of Sin, and chastises for Sin by the Terrors of a guilty Mind, and shuts up a Man unto the Faith.

If he show his Hearer that the *Law* bears the Image of its Author, as being *holy, just and good*; and that tho' it condemns us, it does not wrong us: If he walk according to this Rule himself; if he use it in his Practice, as well as in Preaching; if he is an Example to Believers in Word and Doctrine, in Word and Deed, and acknowledge, that he can expect *Justification only by the Righteousness of Christ, without the Deeds of the Law*, desiring vehemently to be found in him, acknowledging himself an unprofitable Servant.

If he deliver the Doctrine of the Law purely, not mixing his own Imaginations, not *reaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

If he teach not the Law merely, or only, in a habitual Neglect of the Gospel: If he *conceal not Christ's Righteousness within his Heart, nor God's Loving-kindness* in imputing it.

If he teach the Subjects the acceptable Manner of Obedience, that 'tis humble and self-denied; if he teach the Obedient the Method of Acceptance, that *Persons and Performances are accepted in Christ the Beloved, a new and living Way*; if he teach Transgressors what is the meritorious Cause of Acquittance and Remission, even Christ's Obedience unto Death, the Merit of his Blood. I ask them that desire to be Teachers of the Law, and habitually omit the Doctrine of the Gospel, Is it not the daily Practice of those who profess the Knowledge of the Civil and Municipal Laws, and are Advocates by Office, to advise their Clients how to claim that which is their Right or Property, and how to be cleared or escape the Rigour of Law when they have done Wrong, and incur'd a Penalty? The Lawiers in the neighbouring Nation are from this Part of their Practice called *Councils*, as with us their Appearance at the Bar denominates them *Advocates*. How defective then are those Preachers, comparatively considered, in the Discharge of their Office to guilty Men, while they daily teach the Law, but seldom or rarely show their Hearers in whose Merit it is that they can be accepted, nor in whose Righteousness they can be acquitted? Such Teachers of the Law may fear the rising up of those Gentlemen in Judgment against them, seeing they perform their Office so much more perfectly as to Time and Things temporal than they do as to Things not seen and eternal.

Moreover, *the Law is good, if the Interpreter or Preacher use it lawfully*, as not extending the Doctrine thereof so as to encroach upon the Time, and Room or Place of the Gospel, as if Men had it in  
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their Power to obey God's Commands perfectly in this Life, as if they were not already under the Sentence of Death for breaking the Law, and as if they could now escape by the Deeds of the Law, or be absolved from the Penalty, for obeying the Precept.

*The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully; that is, if the Interpreter misapply it not as to Persons or Purposes; if he level it not by false Glosses, as if it were against the Righteous upon the one Hand, and if he do not misinterpret it, as if it favoured the Lawless and Disobedient on the other Hand: For, as Satan transforms himself into an Angel of Light, so he teaches Men to practise and plead for Vice, under the Colour or Pretext of Virtue, and to reproach Virtue under the Name and Title of Vice. There is no Want of such as call Evil Good, and Good Evil; and put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes, Isa. v. 20.*

But, to sum up this Account, the *lawful Use of the Law* upon the Preacher's Part is, to use it doctrinally, as a Means to restrain from Sin, as a Bridle or Restraint to the Sinner, as a Directory to Holiness, to hold it out as a Light to Mens Feet, but not to pretend that a Man for Obedience Sake may expect Life. Holiness is the Way to the *City of Habitation*, but not *the Gate by which the Just do enter*. It is an Honour peculiar to the Mediator to be the *Door* by which Men can enter in.

The Law is also well used as an Argument or Means to convince of Sin, as a Glass wherein a Man may see his Deformity and Corruption, as a Sentence wherein a Sinner may hear the Terrors of Condemnation: And thus the Preacher can improve it as a Monitor or alarming Means to excite his Hearer to put on Christ's Righteousness, as that only which can protect him from Suffering, and cover his Shame.

If the Interpreter or Preacher thus use the Law, he does it lawfully; he acquits himself in his Office agreeably to its End, and teaches the Law like a Minister of the Gospel.

*adly,*

2dly, *The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully,* as a Subject or Hearer; that is, if he hate not Instruction, if he cast not these Words behind his Back, if he reposit the Law in his Memory, if he hide the Word in his Heart, if he esteem it highly in his Judgment, as holy, just and good; if he detain not the Truth in Unrighteousness, but love the Law in his Heart, and acknowledge its Righteousness practically in his Life; if he prefer it as a Rule to all human Laws, when there is a Competition, believing it better to obey God than Man.

If he obey it as in Gratitude to a Benefactor that cannot be requited, as in Subjection to a Lord and Master that cannot be profited, and in Love to a Lawgiver that cannot be equalled: If he be humble and self-denied in his Obedience, not sacrificing to his own Net, not burning Incense to his own Drag, not pretending to find the Original of true Virtue and Goodness in himself, in his natural Powers or Passions; for to pretend this, is a great Height of Vain-glorying, instead of Self-denial, convicted to be so by Scripture-light, and condemned by the Gospel-law, which says, *Let a Man deny himself,* — *Matth. xvi. 24.* And further,

*The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully;* if he receive it as delivered by the Hand of a Mediator, not imagining, not pretending, that the Law can procure him any good Thing from the Judge, or that he can be meritorious by a Compliance; but 'tis good, if he walk in it as the Way of Holiness, if he acknowledge his Shortcomings, if he pretend not that his own Righteousness is the Door.

If he view the Latitude of the Precepts, and confess himself by Nature a Prisoner to the Penalty; if, in Fear of Execution, he look unto Jesus to set him free; if he use not the Law as a Covenant of Works, whereof he could now perform the Condition and live by it; if he pretend not to obey in his own Strength, or be accepted in his own Righteousness, or escape the Penalty for his personal Obedience to the Precept.

*sally*, If he use it lawfully as a *Party* to a Cause.

To use the Law lawfully in this Instance, is to consider, (1.) What it permits or prohibites a Man to do in making Demands upon others, or as standing on the Defence; and in both Cases to eye the Law of Love, and walk according to this Rule, *Matth. vii. 12.*—

*All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them: For this is the Law and the Prophets.* As also, the Law is, in this Instance, lawfully used, when a Men follows Peace in the Manner wherein he prosecutes or demands that which is his Right and Property, and uses not the Law litigiously.

(2.) To use it lawfully in such a Capacity, is not to prosecute Claims, in virtue of human Laws, beyond the Limits of Justice, or not to pretend to Claims of Right by virtue of Civil or Municipal Laws, when those are not conformable or agreeable to the Divine Law; for it is the Standard or Rule whereby to know that which is right, and the Test or Touchstone whereby to discern that which is wrong; and if Men do not so use it, it is not used lawfully.

(3.) To use it *lawfully* in this Case is, not to insist in Claims of Right and Property, to the Prejudice of Mercy and Charity; or not to offend against the Latter, by insisting rigorously in the Former. This we are taught by what the Lord said to a Servant dealing rigorously with a Fellow-Servant, *Matth. xviii. 32, 33.*

If the Claimant has transgressed in the Abuse of Law on his Part, the Respondent is under a Law not to return one Injury for another; and both are to have a strict Regard to Truth, not pretending to Claims of Right, or any Title in Law, by false Allegations in Points of Fact; nor to exact a Penalty, where there is no real Transgression of a Precept, nor Breach of Paction or Trust.

*ably*, The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully as an Advocate for his Client.

I do not here principally treat of Law as a Science, but  
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considered chiefly as a *Precept*. Lawiers themselves know best what is decent and becoming in the Discharge of their Trust; And as the Office of an Advocate is honourable; so, with us, it is magnified by many learned Gentlemen of the Faculty, who are ornamental, as well as useful and necessary to their Nation.

But, seeing the Apostle in my Text speaks not only of the Precepts of the Divine Law, but also of the Knowledge of that Law, and of the Goodness of it as known, as also of the lawful Use of that Knowledge, it is not from my Purpose as a Preacher, to treat of the lawful Use of Law as a *Science*, in Conformity to the Divine Law or Precept; and of that Science as practised either in the Office of an Advocate or Judge. I am now upon the Former, being next to view the Latter.

Agreeably therefore to my Text, I take notice, that the *Advocate* uses his Science *lawfully*, in relation to the Divine Law, when he shows his Client whether that Municipal Law upon which he can found his Claim is just and good, and whether his Pretensions are justly founded in that Statute: The Advocate is Council or Judge for his Client, in the first Instance; and has it much in his Power, by his Consultation, to prevent the Iniquity of a covetous or ambitious Client in demanding, and of an ignorant or corrupt Judge in deciding, who either knows not, or cares not to use the Law lawfully.

And, next, the Advocate uses the Law lawfully, if, when at the Bar, he plead the Cause of *Truth* and *Justice*, viewing the *moral Precepts* as the prime Rule of his Practice in Law as a Science; and thus his Pleading is beautified with a Conformity in Part to *him who speaks in Righteousness* as an Advocate, as well as a Judge: For, because he satisfied Justice, he interceeds for our Escape; and, as having made a Purchase, he asks that we may enjoy, or craves that his People be put in Possession.

Having now applied the Supposition, made in the Text, to the Discharge of the Advocate's Office, passing that, I go next to view what Aspect the Text has

has upon those who usurp that Office, and tho' not vested with it, do take upon them by Word or Writ to plead the Cause of human Laws when these interfere with the Divine, or of Civil and Municipal Laws when such do in-croach upon the spiritual Privileges and Immunities of the Church. This is to deal with the Divine Law very *unlawfully*, as being constructively an Attempt to *make the Commandment of none Effect* in favour of human Constitutions: And as this cannot be innocent in any, so the Aggravations of this Guilt do still rise higher, or become more hainous, in Men vested with Ecclesiastick Offices, than in others, if they, to serve the Interests of a Party, gratify a Passion, or, to promote some wordly Projects, do so practise; yea, even while they themselves acknowledge such Statutes to be aggrieving to Conscience, and injurious to the spiritual Interests of sacred Society, and yet, notwithstanding such Acknowledgments, not only do such Things *themselves*, but take *Pleasure in those that do them*; or, to express it in the Terms of the Prophet, *Hos. v. 11.* do approve of those who willingly or of Choice walk after such Commandments.

5thly, I said, *The Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully as a Judge.*

This is an Instance of Morality, no less brightning to his Character, than beneficial to the Commonwealth or his Country; but the Reverse of that Conduct is a great Evil to both.

At this Period 'tis fit I take Notice, according to the Text, That he who sits upon a Judgment-seat, needs know that the Law, according to which he decides, is good, or consonant to the Justice of the supreme Law; as also to be able to compare the competing Causes, and the Conformity or Disconformity of either to the Rule of Decision: Otherwise, if he decide ignorantly, he cannot decide innocently; Zeal, when not according to Knowledge, is not acceptable, and Decisions of Ignorance cannot be approvable: A Decision upon a Law betwixt contending Parties is called *Judgment*; and how can he be said to act judiciously, who knows

not the Conformity of the subordinate Statute to the supreme Law, nor what Relation the competing Causes have to the Statute? And, if he decide without or against such Knowledge, he uses not the Law lawfully, neither the Divine nor Human Laws.

If a Man be sure that a Law is Divine or of God, he is sure that it is good; but human Statutes need to be tried by the supreme Law of Righteousness, when a Man is to form his Practice in a private or publick Capacity; because Men are fallible, tho' they did not intend to *establish Iniquity by a Law*. 'Tis true, the Lawyers say, That a Judge is not a Moderator of the Laws according to which he is to judge, but a Minister to them; and so is concerned to form his Decisions upon them. But then, when this Rule is applied, the Honour of the Application is first due unto God, and to his Law; for a Magistrate is the *Minister of God to them for Good*: And, if the Preference is not given to his Law in Judgment, Men use it not lawfully.

All I intend to say further upon the Office of a Judge is reducible to this Sum, That Ecclesiastick Judges do use the Law *lawfully*, when they hold to *the Law and the Testimony*, not truckling to Ministers of the State in making or applying Ecclesiastick Statutes; and when Civil Judges do, in their Administration and Decisions, eye the Good of the Church.

1<sup>st</sup>, As it is the special and prime Concern of Overseers of the Church, to please Him who called them to be spiritual Soldiers or Officers in the spiritual Army, *2 Tim. ii. 4.* so it is observed that *Men-pleasers* in the Church do seldom acquire much Honour by their Practice in Politicks, and that they are attended with little Success in such Services to the State, but fall often into Contempt, as neglecting their Trust, mis-spending their precious Time, and not applying their Talents to the proper Ends of their Office.

2<sup>dly</sup>, As to Civil Judges, these do use the Law *lawfully*, when they aim at promoting *Jerusalem's* Good



Good in their Administration; for, if the Civil Magistrate is the Minister of God to Men, in general, for Good, Rom. xiii. 4. doubtless he is so, by his Institution, to the Church, in special. Thus are Magistrates directed by the Precepts given them, and thus is it promised to the Church concerning them; *Kings shall be thy Nursing-fathers, and Queens thy Nursing-mothers*, Isa. xlix. 23.

A Promise often fulfilled in grand Instances to the Church, sometimes to the *Jews*, sometimes to the *Gentiles*: To the first in the Days of the reforming Kings of *Judah*, who restored the Interests of Religion by a Reformation, when the Priests had almost lost all Sense of the Value of instituted Worship, and all Care of the Temple OEconomy, and had been ready to give up with any Part of the Institution, in Complement to, or Compliance with, the degenerate Kings and Princes; pretending, no doubt, for so doing, That this was the proper Means for keeping the Peace of the Church, in thus cultivating a Harmony and Concord with the State. Under Colour of this Pretence, as appears, *Urijah the Priest prepared an Altar of a Fashion with that which King Ahaz had seen at Damascus and sent him, who had it ready against the King came Home*, 2 Kings. xvi. 10, 11, 12. Thus probably the Priests apologized to the objecting Remnant of the People, who were ashamed and aggrieved, we may think, to see them so frank in their Compliances.

Next, As to the Church considered as since Christ came, who is *over all God blessed for ever*; those Christian Emperors and Kings, who have acted zealously in Defence of the Faith once delivered to the Saints, not pretending to Dominion over their Faith, do stand fam'd in History as so many Fulfillments of the fore said Promise. And all those Kings who in any Age have most used their Sword as a Terror to the Breakers of God's Law within their Kingdoms, and have least used the Sceptre in making any interfering Laws for the Church, leaving her to the free Enjoyment

of spiritual Privileges, have had the loudest Acclamations of the People, as worthy of the Honours belonging to the Crown.

And so strong is the Impression, so bright the Evidence of this Truth, That the Civil Magistrate is by his Administration and Decisions to maintain the Rights and Privileges of the Church, that, in some Places, where the Government is much arbitrary, and the Prerogative far extended, the Discipline of the Church is countenanced according to her Kind and the Constitution; so that the Sentences of Civil Judges in the inferior Courts do not interfere with it, nor are there such Sentences past in Prejudice of it. \*

When Civil Courts pass Sentences interfering with that which is properly Ecclesiastick Power, they break in upon that Order of Things which God hath established in the World, joining those Concerns which he hath separated, and separating those Rights and Interests which he hath joined. *This is an Evil under the Sun*, manifest to Observation, grievous to Experience, indecorous as well as injurious to Society, and unseemly to be seen; which readily comes to pass in Consequence of another Evil, to wit, when *Folly is set in great Dignity*; which, a wise and inspired King says, is *an Error which proceedeth from the Ruler*, Eccl. x. 5, 6.

In the last Place, I go to take a View of the Consequences of this Article of the Apostle's Knowledge, *That the Law is good, if a Man use it lawfully*. And,

*First*, Seeing the right Use of the Law as a Divine Command, is not only to teach and learn Justice from it, but also to alarm the Transgressor of the Precept, to flee from the Penalty, to him *who is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*; And, seeing an Abuse of the Law is a Breach of the Law, how guilty must they be in the Preacher's Office, who habitually neglect to use it for that great  
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\* Domat of publick Law, Book 1. Tit. 19,

End, and desire to be Teachers of the Law, so as to neglect or omit to preach the glad Tidings of the Gospel? As this Omission is most unbecoming their Office; and disagreeable to their Name, while called Preachers of the Gospel; so is it a Sinning against their own Souls, and those of their Hearers, while they neglect to preach Christ the Saviour, having the Gospel committed to their Trust, 1 *Tim.* i. 7. In which Case, to conceal Christ's Righteousness, and God's Loving-kindness in imputing it, is a Murdering of Souls under Trust, in so far as they conceal the King's Act of Indemnity; and to murder under Trust, is, with us, called *statutory Treason*, or Treason against the Statute.

As this defective Manner of Teaching is comparatively unprofitable to the Hearers in general, who have neither Strength wherein to obey the Law, nor Righteousness of their own wherewith to satisfy for Transgressions; so is it unpleasant and unacceptable to the better Part, that is, the converted Part, of their Hearers: 'Tis unacceptable to them who have *known the Terrors of the Lord*, and are bently set, vehemently desirous, to escape the Wrath to come; to them *who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them*; to them *who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, that God is good*. Unless your Doctrine have a *sweet Savour of Christ*, and thus allure as well as alarm; unless you show them whither to flee, as well as put them in Fear; unless you preach the Doctrine of Satisfaction as made to Justice, as well as that of Holiness and Obedience to the Law, Satisfaction to its Demands as well as Submission to the Precepts; unless you preach Christ's Preciousness and infinite Value, as well as the Doctrine of Moral Virtue; altho' you should treat of the Law ever so wisely, describe the Moral Virtues ever so justly, flourish upon their Character, and expatiate in their Commendation ever so eloquently; were your Oratory rapid and fluent as *Cicero's the Roman*, or slower and placid as *Molo's the Athenian*, they will be ready to say of the



the Sermon, *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without Salt? or is there any Taste in the White of an Egg?* Job vi. 6.

You cannot stand high in their Esteem, nor be dear to their Hearts in the Management of your Trust, unless you praise Christ's Person, notify his Commission, declare his Offices, and affirm his Allsufficiency to save: Unless you commend his Grace, extol his Righteousness, proclaim his Welcome, and in his Name offer his Mercy to all that are willing, altho' they may acknowledge you Preachers by Permission of holy Providence, yet they find not in their Hearts to acknowledge that you are such *by the Commandment of God the Saviour*, to use the Apostle's Stile at the Beginning of this Epistle.

Nothing less can please those believing Hearers, than to have their Consciences made peaceful by the Merit of Christ's Blood, their Hearts warm in his Love, their Souls joyful in his Praise, and their Spirits revived in Hope of living for ever in his Presence: And it is by Means of the Doctrine of Christ's Death and Resurrection, that the Spirit of Life moulds them into such a holy and happy Frame, so blisful a Disposition; *Received ye the Spirit*, says the Apostle, *by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* Gal. iii. 2.

But in Defence of those, who, under the Name of preaching the Gospel, confine their Doctrine habitually to the Law, it is pled, 1<sup>st</sup>, That to preach the Law of Christ, is to preach his Gospel.

To this I answer, That to preach the Law as given by the Hand of a Mediator, enjoining a practical Expression of a sincere Respect to his Commandments, in Sign and Token of Reconciliation and Friendship, and in Gratitude to him for delivering us from the Penalty of the Law, by fulfilling all Righteousness for us; and in Gratitude to his Father, for sending such a Deliverer; this is Gospel, the Substance of the glad Tidings.

If the Preacher explain the Precepts, not only as directing Men how to walk becomingly in Dependence on Sovereignty, and in Subjection to Divine Authority; but also how to walk thankfully to God in Christ, as having *reconciled the World to himself*; how to walk orderly, forward and upward to enjoy him; how to walk conformably to him, or as Christ also walked, as being the Way to the Place where the Believer desires to be for ever with him: And if at the same Time he caution his Hearers to walk self-deniedly and dependently, expecting an Admission into that Place only by the Gate of Christ's Righteousness; this is Gospel. But,

It is for the Concealment of those Ends and Motives, and of that Caution, that we find Fault, according to the Apostle's Scope in the Context. So that, upon the other Hand, to deliver the Doctrine of Morality in a profound Silence of every Thing that favours of the Gospel-report and Grace of God by Jesus Christ, without the least Warning that Justification cannot be had by our personal Obedience, without showing in whose Strength it is that Men can obey, in whose Righteousness sincere Aims can be accepted, or for whose Sufferings and Sacrifice Transgressors can be acquitted; this is not Gospel.

I observe to you, that, when the Moral Law was delivered by *Moses*, he delivered it with an Evangelical Preface, in Words of a typical Significancy in relation to the great Deliverance to be expected by the *Messiah*; and at that Period he also taught the People the Ceremonial Law, which in Figure was full of Gospel, as I have hinted already: So that, when any such as are vested with the Office of Preachers of the Gospel under the New-Testament Dispensation, do teach the Moral Law as abstractedly from the Gospel, as I have supposed, they are not properly called *legal Preachers*, but rather may be called *illegal* or *irregular*, *defective* or *deficient*. For they preach not as *Jews*, seeing they preach not the Observance of the Ceremonial Law as they that expect the *Messiah* to make *Reconciliation*,  
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and *bring in everlasting Righteousness*; neither should they, for he is come already for that End, who is *God over all*, and we need not wait for another. Nor do they preach as Christians; for they omit the Doctrine of the Gospel contained in the *faithful Saying, that Christ came into the World*, as in the 15 v. of this Chapter. So that, on the Supposition I have made, the Reading a Portion of Scripture as their Text, is almost all that in the Office of Preachers they have of Conformity to either: And to perform thus, makes a Man appear as a *Counterfeit* in the Preacher's Office.

In teaching the Doctrine of Morality, such Preachers are often far exceeded by the Heathen Moralists, excepting when they resume their Sayings; for some of those Writers do recommend themselves for an Exactness of Thought or Judgment, Sprightliness of Imagination, and Eloquence of Expression, rarely to be matched, or seldom to be equalled, and but for a Wonder to be, by the Moderns, exceeded.

They, with an ingenious Use of Figures and strong Allusion, with such Knowledge and in such Sentiments as they had, did recommend some moral Virtues as a Means of preventing a little Uneasiness within, and Inconveniencies without, as wholesome for Nature, as encouraging to Invention or Art, as profitable to Men in their present State, as conducive to the Ends of civil Society, as healthful for the Body, as friendly to One's outward Estate, as raising his Fame and Reputation, and as outwardly decent in his Life and Manners: *Plato, Seneca or Cicero* could flourish those Arguments to the Life, or with great Vivacity. But if One vested with the Office of the Preacher do carry the Motives of Conformity and Obedience to God's Law no farther, if he direct to Ends no higher, if he adduce Reasons no stronger, he but deceives himself and his Hearers, forfeits the Honour of his Office, and betrays his Trust; for he uses not the Law according to the Directions and Ends of the Gospel, if he urge not the Study of Holiness, if he excite not to new Obedience



as in Gratitude to so great a Deliverer, in Conformity to so glorious a Head as Christ, in Compliance with the Ends of Redemption, in Desire to dwell with the Redeemer, and as believing that Holiness becomes them that have so lively a Hope, and disposes or makes Men *meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. And in this Gospel the Believer is dissuaded from polluting himself by the Practice of Sin, because he is washed with so precious Blood, and inhabited by the Holy Spirit.

But, *2dly*, They that desire to be Teachers of the Law do pretend, in Defence of their Manner of Preaching, to stand in the Shadow and imitate the Practice of the Apostle *James*, who, say they, insists mostly, if not altogether, upon the Doctrine of the Law and good Works: And, How then can Men find Fault with us, and be innocent as to him, or escape the Charge of Guilt against the Character of the inspired Apostle?

To this I answer, *first*, That they much injure the Apostle, when they pretend to imitate his Pattern by their Practice; which I may show, by adducing some Instances of that Apostle's Doctrine.

At the Beginning of his Epistle, he tells the Tribes scattered abroad, to whom he writes, That he is to deliver his Doctrine touching the Law as he had received it from the Hand of a Mediator, who *gathers the Dispersed of Israel*; and he by the Spirit calls Jesus LORD, the LORD.

In the 2d and 3d Verses, he shows, that the Way of Providence, in exercising their Patience so much, was of Design and Purpose to try their Faith, and show the World that it was not dead, but operative, as continuing them in Union with Christ the living Head, under Influence of the Spirit.

In the 6th v. he shows that the only successful Way of addressing God is by Faith in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator 'twixt God and Men.

In the 12th v. he refers to the Communion-discourses that had past betwixt Jesus and the Disciples,

wherein he had spoke of his Love to them, and its Effects; as also of their Love to him, as being the Pulse of Faith; for *Faith worketh by Love*, and the Apostle teaches them to expect the Crown of Life as a Gift of Grace to them that love him.

In the 18th v. he teaches the Doctrine of free Grace, or God's Good-will toward Men; and of Regeneration as the Effect thereof; and of the Preferment and Glory which is given them who are thus changed by Grace: For says he, *We are the First-fruits of his Creatures.*

In the Beginning of the 2d Chapter, he affirms the Glory of Christ's Divine Nature, and his Relation to us in the Mediator Office and human Nature, calling him *our Lord Jesus Christ*, and *Lord of Glory*. And withal he forbids Respect of Persons in Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, as not being decent in the Administration, because 'tis not consistent with the Faith of that free Grace which established the OEconomy, or fixed the Constitution.

In *James* iv. 8. he exhorts Sinners to *wash Hearts and Hands*, no doubt, by Means of Faith in Christ's Blood, and in the Efficacy of the sanctifying Spirit.

In the 5th Chap. the Apostle concludes with the Doctrines of Communion with God by Faith in Prayer, and of the Conversion of Men.

'Tis particularly noticeable, that the Apostle speaking of the Law, which he has in View, calls it the *Law of Liberty*, *Jam. i. 25. Jam. ii. 12.* And whether this be understood of the Law by which the Lord Jesus directs his freed Men what Way to hold, going home to the promised Land, after he has delivered them from the *House of Bondage*; or of the great Gospel-law of believing in Christ, and loving God, in the Exercise of that Faith, by Means whereof the Believer was made free: In either of these Views, 'tis evident that the Apostle treats of the Law, which is the Subject of his Discourse, evangelically; or in a Manner becoming one who was a *Minister or Apostle of Christ*, and not ashamed of his Gospel.

From

From those Considerations 'tis evident, that they who desire to be Teachers of the Law abstractedly, and so differ from the Apostle *Paul*, do not agree with the Apostle *James*; they stand not in his Shadow, they follow not his Pattern, they can derive no Excuse from his Practice.

2dly, I answer to their Pretence of setting him before them, in this Practice or Manner of Preaching, as their Pattern; That it is amiss to consider the Epistle of *James*, as if it were apart or set by itself. The Scriptures are to be viewed as one continued Text, consisting of a great Variety of Parts in relation to one another: The Prophets and Apostles *spoke as they were inspired*; and, while the Holy Ghost dictated to one of them, he well knew what he was to add by another, till the Canon was closed: And in this View of the Scriptures, they are called *the Word of God*, because of the Harmony and Concurrence of the several Parts of Scripture, to that which is the End and Design of the Whole. *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect,* 2 Tim. iii. 16. So that we may consider the Epistle of *James* as a Reproof to them who boast of a fruitless, unactive and lonely Faith, not uniting with Christ the Head, not deriving Influences of Life and Love from him to the Heart, and therefore not employing the Hands in his Service and to his Honour. And, as he thus reproveth for entertaining a vain Opinion of a dead Faith, the Apostle who writes to the *Hebrews*, and *Peter* who wrote to the scattered Strangers throughout *Pontus, Galatia, &c.* do fully and expressly describe the Nature, illustrate the Exercise, praise the Object, and show the Effects of a lively and justifying Faith; and betwixt those two Epistles that of the Apostle *James* is placed. And we are commanded to search the Scriptures, to read the whole Text, with this Argument, or from this Inducement, *That these are they, saith the Lord Jesus, which testify of me,*  
John



John v. 39. And if a Man obey this Command, if a Reader search the sacred Text, he cannot miss abundant Mention made of the Mystery of Godliness, in the several Parts or Views thereof, *God manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory,* 1 Tim. iii. 16. In the great Extent of this Field the rich Treasure is hid, the Pearl of great Price is to be found: There we are informed of the Eternity of Christ's Generation, the Contents of his Commission, the Seasonableness of his Birth, the Holiness of his Life, the Perfection of his Righteousness, the Merit of his Death, the Power of his Resurrection, the Success of his Intercession, the Certainty of his Return, and the Benefit which results to his People from all.

How disagreeable then is that Manner of Teaching, which the Apostle finds Fault with, unto the sacred Text? if we view it in the Relation of the Parts according to Propriety: For, if the Preacher insists on the Doctrine of the Law to the Period of his Discourse, making no Mention of Christ as the End of it for Righteousness, nor of our Need of him for that End; and if he use not the Law as a School-master to bring Men to Christ, he falls short of the chief End of his Doctrine, and cannot excuse himself as having a Design to do these Things next *Sabbath-day*, or sometime afterwards. For, when he preaches To-day, he knows not if ever he do it again; and he may have Hearers one Day, yea, such as have much felt Need to hear the Doctrine of Christ's Righteousness for Justification, who will never hear him another Day, were he to preach ever so oft during the Currency of his Time: AND THEREFORE it is becoming, in the Discharge of his Office from Day to Day, to shew the Use of the Law in Respect to the Gospel; and, upon every Occasion of appearing as a Preacher in Christ's Stead, to call Men from Mount *Sinai* to Mount *Zion*, once before parting with his Audience, to hear the glad Tidings which Jesus brought thither.

He

He needs, one Appearance after another, to show his Hearers, not only what to do, but what they have already deserved ; or that they are naturally undone, and how to be restored, how to escape ; or that the Burden of Sin is too great for them to bear, and who he is that can free their Shoulders from it, or on whom to cast it : Not only to show them which Way to walk, but that they have already *fallen by their Iniquity*, and polluted themselves ; and how they may be cleansed, or in what Fountain to wash : Not only to show them that they are Subjects to Divine Authority, but obnoxious to Justice, and that 'tis Christ only who can make them free : Not only that the Law is a Rule of Life, or Directory to Holiness ; but that, unless they walk by Faith in Christ the Author of the Gospel, leaning entirely unto Jesus, they cannot expect their *latter End* to be *Peace*, or *Peace to be on them* at that Period.

Having now replied to these Defences which they, who affect to be Teachers of the Law, do make for themselves, as pretending to imitate the Apostle *James* in his Manner, through the Current of his Epistle; it is easy to expose the Weakness of such Pretences as are taken from the Example of some polite Doctors of the *English* Side, for such a defective Manner of discharging the Preacher's Office as here lies open to a Reproof, in Consequence of the Apostle's Censure past upon them who affect to teach the Law, in the Room or Place of the Gospel.

I cannot vindicate some of those Divines from this heavy Charge: And if it be a guilty Practice in the Example, it cannot be innocent in the Imitation; whatsoever Abilities, natural or acquired, on the Part of such Authors, might have induced others to follow them. How often is it seen, that *the Wisdom of this World*, in relation to the Mysteries now made known to the Church, *cometh to nought*? One of their most fam'd Orators in the Preacher's Office \* makes no Mention of the Merit of Christ's Blood in the Directions

Directions he gives for obtaining Spiritual Peace, nor any Mention of our Need of his Mediation in order to Friendship with God, while he treats of Reconciliation in a Sermon preached to a publick and honourable Audience; and can this his Manner warrant Mens Conformity to it, or can his Example justify their Imitation? I conclude this, observing with Regret, how dear an Attainment the Preacher makes, who acquires the *English* Stile and Manner, at the Expence of habitually omitting the Gospel Mysteries and Substance in his Sermons, while eager in Imitation of some such Authors. I do not say but a Man may commendably reform his Stile, without parting with so precious Substance; but he needs take special Care that, in attempting the one, he neglect not the other. And as a taking Care of this tendeth to the Edification of the Hearer, so doth it result in the Honour of the Speaker. Whatsoever Ornaments a Pulpit-discourse may have, it is never truly bright and shining, unless the Sun of Righteousness appear in the Doctrine, unless the Sermon be as a Tabernacle for that Sun; it is not a joyful Sound, unless the Disciples may hear the Voice of Christ's Salutation in it, saying, *It is I; or, Come unto me.* It is not a sweet Savour, unless *his Name* be therein as *Ointment poured forth*, unless it smell of the *Rose of Sharon*: It pleases not a Believer's Taste, if, in Propriety of Means, it is not so conceived, as that he can *taste therein that the Lord is gracious.* The Preacher may as well think to please the Ear with Colours, or the Eye with Sounds, as to obtain a Testimony, or gain Approbation, from those of a spiritual Discerning, without this. As a precious Christ is the *the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*; as he is the Author of the Gospel, and the End of all its Ordinances, the Author and Finisher of Faith; so a Sermon never ends well, till it end in him; it is not brought to its proper Period, till it end here. As a believing Hearer desires to be found in Christ, and to fall asleep in him; so he desires a Preacher who has been with Jesus ere he begin his Discourse,



Discourse, who speaks for him and of him while he continues, and falls silent in him when he concludes, that is, ends his Sermon praising his Person, or narrating his Purchase, extolling his Righteousness, offering his Mercy, or admiring his glorious Grace.

2dly, If the good Law of God written in the Scriptures may, by the Corruption of Mens Minds and their Mismanagement in the Exercise of their Ministry, be abused to the Prejudice of the Hearers of the Gospel; then, how much do they transgress both against the Law and the Gospel, who *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, and the *Traditions of the Elders* as necessary to be believed and obeyed? A Desire to teach these Doctrines, and to prescribe such Laws, waxed strong and prevailed much in the Jewish Church, and early infected the Christian Church; which Desire and Inclination exerts itself vigorously in some to this Day. But the Truth and Goodness of the Apostle's Doctrine in the Context, shews, that these Desires or this Disposition is bad. If *Fables and endless Genealogies* were so unedifying, then, what is it that makes them so profitable now, as to pretend that the Satisfaction of Mens Consciences, touching the Validity and Efficacy of Ministerial Administrations in the Church, depends upon them, or the Knowledge of them? If the Apostle left *Timothy* at *Ephesus* of Purpose to forbid Men to give Heed to these traditional Genealogies, as endless and unfinishable, uncertain and undeterminable; Why then is the Knowledge and Adjustment of such traditional Genealogies in the Church, thought necessary to fix the Credit of Ministerial Authority now?

I observe on these Genealogies,

1. That the Apostle forbids Men to regard them, after all the Pains that had been taken on them, for this Reason, that they were *endless*, and unfinishable by the Preachers.

2. That they were *unprofitable* to the Hearers.

1st, That they were endless, that is, unfinishable by the Preacher; so many Difficulties occur, so many

perplexing Questions arise, in attempting to adjust them, that they can never be finished to Satisfaction: To attempt to answer one Question, raises new Difficulties, or gives Birth to another; so that the Genealogist can come to no Determination, nor give any satisfying Resolution; he can neither satisfy himself, nor his Reader or Hearer. There are so strong Objections to the Evidence at advising the Proof of those traditional Ecclesiastick Genealogies, that there is no Rest to be expected for the Mind by any Decision formed upon it. The Apostle says, They are *endless*, and *minister Questions*.

2dly, They make not for *godly Edifying*, which is in Faith, 1 Tim. i. 4. Altho' they could be finished, and the Proof made full, there is no Relevance to a Man's Conscience in them: To depend on these Genealogies, is but to build on the Sand, instead of the Rock Christ. It is not by vertue of Exactness in the Computation of Multitudes or Numbers of *Priests, Levites* or *Bishops* in their Succession to one another, but by the Merit and infinite Value of *One who died for all*, who is the incomparable Bishop and Shepherd of Souls, that a Man can find Rest to his guilty and tossed Mind, and troubled Heart. And, because such vain Pretences as were then made for those traditional Genealogies, and the Knowledge thereof, tended to withdraw Mens Faith from the sure Foundation, or to prevent the Establishment of their Faith in him; the Apostle forbids to give so much as Heed to them, notwithstanding that they thought themselves concerned to be very exact in those Reckonings and Genealogies, whereby the *Priests* and *Levites* desired to prove he Authority of their Ministrations, and for that End had Genealogies preserved for many Years, as a learned Commentator \* observes from *Lightfoot* and *Josephus*.

In Tit. iii. 9. the Apostle also discharges such Genealogies: And as he joins them with Fables in this Chapter, wherein is the Text; so he joins them with foolish Questions in that Chapter, and sets them in

Opposition

Opposition to those Things which are profitable to Men ; as we see, comparing *Tit.* iii. 8, 9. Verses, with *1 Tim.* i. 4.

But the Gentlemen, of that Side, who are zealous for such Genealogies in the Christian Church, being resolute for a Time to please themselves, and amuse others with such Traditions ; I leave them, and pass to another Consequence.

*3dly*, Men use not the Law *lawfully* in their Manner of treating of it in Publick, or comply not with the Scope of it ; they fall not in with the Design of it, which is, to bring Men to Christ ; HENCE is Faith so rare in the Earth, in our Part of the World. Men affect to be Teachers of the Law, and in their Manner do not use it lawfully, that is, they use not the Holiness of the Precept as a Glass wherein to show Men their Guilt ; in order next to use the Terrors of the Penalty, as a Means of exciting them to flee for Refuge to the Saviour : But, instead thereof, do deliver the Doctrine of the Law so abstractedly from Christ as the *End of it for Righteousness*, as if Righteousness were by the Law itself, or as if a Man could fulfil the Precept in his own Strength, and satisfy the Penalty by his personal Righteousness, or expiate his former Offences by Repentance and After-obedience.

'Tis evident, that *Moses* did not deliver the Law after this Manner, nor with this Mind ; but, in delivering the Moral and Ceremonial Law, saw Christ's *Day afar off, and rejoiced* ; and particularly delivered the Law of the Jubilee, in Contemplation of his Coming : He pointed at him, saying, *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee, a Prophet, from the Midst of thee, of thy Brethren*——Deut. xviii. 15. So did he foresee his Day, in delivering the Moral and Ceremonial Law.

What Part, what Precept, of the Ceremonial Law is it, that does not set forth typically, either our Need of him, or the Excellency which is in him ; the Grace to be brought with him, or the great Things to be done and suffered by him ? SO THAT, if a Man do now explain the Moral or Ceremonial Law without looking



unto Jesus, and exhorting others so to do, as to the glorious Person in whom the Law has its Fulfilment, and the guilty Subjects their Sanctuary; One is apt to say, at least ready to think, of his defective Manner of preaching, as is said concerning the Unbelief of the *Jews*, John v. 46. *Had thy believed Moses, says the Lord, they would have believed me, for he wrote of me.* So a believing Hearer is apt to say within himself, of such a Preacher as makes not a seasonable Mention of Christ's Righteousness in delivering the Doctrine of the Law, *Had he believed Moses, he would have preached Christ; for Moses wrote of him.* O the Hardness of his Heart, who can explain the Law in any Precept of it, without directing to Him, without high Commendations, loud Praises of Him! For, as the Ceremonial Law is stored with his Excellencies, so the Moral Law is stamped with his Authority, and prefaced with a special Reason for his Right to command, and an evangelical Motive to obey, *Exod. xx. 2.*

Was the Law evangelically preached, how pleasantly doth the most pinching Part of it, even the Penalty, minister to the Ends of the Gospel? The Equity and Justice of Mens Condemnation adds to the Joy of their Remission. *Every Mouth is stopped, and all the World is become guilty before God; and therefore, when once the Act of Grace is passed, and the Absolution intimated, the lately closed Lips do sing sweetly of Christ and his imputed Righteousness, when they are once opened, and the Tongue loosed.*

ably, If the Law be good as a Command, Law is good as a Science. *We know, says the Apostle, that the Law is good.* But, 1. The sanctified Knowledge of the Reasons and Extent of the Moral Law, the Import and spiritual Meaning of the Ceremonial Law, the Equity and Ends of the Judicial Law, and the proper Uses of all these Laws, are requisite in the Preacher's Office, and contribute to great Advantages in the Dispensation of the Gospel. Yea, 2. The Knowledge of what Civilians have said in explaining some of the *Roman Laws*, contributes much to the Preacher's

Preacher's Assistance in illustrating some Texts of Scripture ; such as their Commentaries on the Roman Servitudes and Freedoms, Adoption, military Testaments and common Wills, Remissions and Indemnities, Things common and peculiar, and on other Titles of the Civil Law, under which are treated such Matters of civil Concern, as have some Resemblance of Things sacred.

5thly, Seeing the Law of the Lord is good, eminently good or perfect, it follows, that Sentences past in the Application of such Human Laws as are inconsistent with it, or not conformable to it, are bad or unjust, howsoever agreeable these Sentences may be to that Statute according to which a Judge gave the Decision. And therefore all Judges, especially those of the Ecclesiastick Kind, who sit in Courts of Conscience (as they are called) have need to examine well their own Statutes by the Law and Testimony, before pronouncing Sentence ; when he who stands at the Bar pleads to his Indictment, or answers to his Accusation, that his Care to keep a good Conscience toward God was the Reason, in that Instance, of his disobeying Men, as not thinking their Statute consistent with his Law ; and that therefore he was but using the Divine Law lawfully, when he gave it the Preference. And this Consequence is applicable particularly to Cases wherein a Man is asked Questions, in Discipline, concerning his Doctrine in the Preacher's Office ; for as Discipline is a Guard to Doctrine, so is sound Doctrine a Guide and Touchstone to Discipline.

The Papists, desiring to lead Men whither they will, and affecting an absolute Government of Conscience, do blindfold them all they can, both by Doctrine and Discipline, that so they may exercise an absolute Authority, and act with a sovereign Power. If this Affectation therefore obtain and prevail in Church-rulers of a Protestant Denomination, it seems to import, that they have some Ends to reach, some special Designs to promote, which need the Means of a Pre-

Pretence to such a Power : And therefore, as the Nations do dread the Consequences of an absolute Authority and unlimited Power in a Prince, not thinking that safe for a State ; it is also wise and prudent for sacred Societies, to keep a watchful Eye over them who affect Preheminence in a Church.

It is now and then occasionally asked, *If the Members of a Church be allowed to enquire into the Equity of her Acts, and decline a Conformity to any of her Statutes, how then can Ecclesiastick Authority be maintained ?*

I answer, That absolute Authority cannot, but limited and lawful Authority may ; 1<sup>st</sup>, By taking as great Care that Ecclesiastick Laws be good, as that they be obeyed ; for Harmony accompanies Holiness. 2<sup>dly</sup>, By the brotherly Manner of endeavouring to convince One's Judgment that the Statute is good, in order to his forming his Practice in a Conformity to it, with a good Conscience. 3<sup>dly</sup>, By a brotherly Forbearance in those Cases wherein Conviction cannot be reach'd, if that can consist with the Edification of the Church, in Things pertaining to Order and OEconomy, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. — *Let all Things be done to Edifying.* 2 Cor. xii. 19. — *We do all Things, Dearly Beloved, for your Edifying.* It was the Apostle's Direction and Example to do all for Edifying ; and *Peace is on them*, Societies greater or lesser in the Church, *that walk according to this Rule.* There Ambition doth not push Authority too far ; there a Spirit of Contradiction and Humour doth not resist it ; there they that are strong, do bear with the Infirmities of them that are weak ; there the Weak are ready to listen to the Reasoning and Arguments of the Strong ; there they that are convinced are at no Blush to yield ; there they who cannot convince others, that themselves are in the right, do not think Authority baffled when they see them using or applying the Divine Law according to their present and profess'd Light ; there the Case of a weak Conscience is tenderly



tenderly consulted, and Allowances are made for it; there they that are stronger in their intellectual Abilities to distinguish and discern, are not rashly censured or condemned by the Weak; there he that hath Faith upon one Side of those Questions of Order and OEconomy, has it to himself, and uses it for the Church to Edification; and there the Dissent of them that differ is admitted, and the Nonconformity of Dissenters is excused; there, and thus, notwithstanding of this Difference, do Brethren dwell together in Unity, and how good and pleasant a Thing is it to see it so! There a *Dew descends from the Lord upon the Mountains of Zion*; and *there the Lord commands the Blessing, even Life for evermore*; so that the Word grows and is multiplied, and the Church, both by Doctrine and Discipline, is edified: The Preaching of the Word profits, the Administration of the Ordinances is pleasant and prosperous; the Prayers of the Church are not hindered, for they can agree to ask a Thing on Earth; publick Ministrations in the Church are succesful, Ministers are satisfied to see their Master's Pleasure prosper, and are honoured by the People; the People are a Joy and a Crown respectively to their Pastors, and both rejoice together: And thus the Church, in her Discipline and Government, is *terrible as an Army with Banners*, wherein Military Discipline requires not the Weakly and Wounded to advance in the same Line with the Strong, but they are taken Care of in the Rear. Happy are the Pastors, and happy is the People, when the Church is in such a Case! And thus the Law is used lawfully.

But, on the contrary, as Stretches of Authority have been observed gradually to unhinge a State or Civil Governments, and to expose their Ministry, so do Abuses of the Law committed by Stretches of Ecclesiastical Authority greatly damage the Church, by exposing her Ministers to the Peoples Aversion, and thus hindering the Success of the Gospel; which are the melancholly Effects of inflicting Censure, and passing

passing severe Sentences upon Members of the Church, for not conforming to an injurious or doubtful and controverted Act of an Ecclesiastick Kind. This is not to use the Law lawfully, because 'tis contrary to Edification, as tending to raise strong Prejudices, to alienate Hearts, to break Harmony, and to hinder the Increase of Holiness, or the Growth of Grace, under the Dispensation of the Gospel: So then, that is well done, or well undone, the doing or not doing whereof tends to Edification, in the promoting some Good, or preventing some Evil.

*6shly*, Seeing the Law is so good, and that Men have so much abused it; How gracious is the Lord, the Lawgiver, in giving us the Gospel, and in bestowing the unspeakable Gift, Jesus Christ, as *the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth!* **THANKS THEREFORE BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.** Remember the Law of Moses, the Lord's Servant, which he commanded unto him in Horeb; and so remember it, as to be excited to receive and embrace Him who is offered in the Gospel, and who offers himself. See that ye despise not him who now speaketh, Heb. iii. 1, 2, 3. Heb. x. 28, 29. How dreadful are the Apostle's Words, *He that despised Moses Law died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses. Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under Foot the Son of God!*—— Receive him therefore, that none of those Things may come upon you. Receive him with an All-acceptation, that so dreadful a Doom may not be pronounced against you, as is threatned against them that have broken the Law, and do also despise the Gospel. Receive him because of your Necessity, and his Allsufficiency and Excellency; the one urgeth, the other allures. How amiable is he, whom ye are called to embrace; and how awful and dreadful those Things threatned against them that refuse!

Receive him therefore with the *Approbation* of your Judgment, with the *Height* of your Esteem, with the

*Vehe-*

*Vehemence of your Will, with the Warmth and Per-  
vency of your Affections, with the Delight and Joy  
of your Hearts, with the Bent and Desire of your  
Souls, with the wishful Cry of an awakned Consci-  
ence, under the deep Convictions of a guilty Mind,  
and with the utmost Extent of your Capacity: Re-  
ceive him, as being so needy Creatures, and condem-  
ned Men; such an Acceptation is he worthy of: But  
sovereign Grace only, in its Power, can make you  
able and willing to embrace this Christ, tho' 'tis our  
Office thus to call, *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates,  
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting Doors, that the King  
of Glory may enter.**

Worthy is he of an All-acceptation, of hearty Em-  
braces, if we consider him whole Son he is, and what  
Sinners we are, and what Sufferings we are liable to.  
He is the Son of the Blessed, and without him we  
are exposed to the Curle: Without him we cannot  
be happy; and in him, with him, we cannot be  
miserable. Receive him, for the Law rejects you,  
or casts and condemns you: Your own Hearts  
condemn you, the World often condemns you,  
and we often condemn one another: But *he that be-  
lieveth on him, is not condemned*, John iii. 18. He is  
doubtless justified, and will be glorified; the Act of  
Grace will be publicly intimated, 1 Tim. ii. 6.—  
The Ransomed of the Lord, says the Apostle, will be  
*attested in due Time*; and then they will be so full of  
Gospel-grace, Grace in its Glory, as that it will not  
appear that ever they once broke the Law, that ever  
they once sinned or suffered any Ailment, or sorrowed,  
or that ever they were put to the Blush or ashamed.  
The Church is to be *presented without Spot or Wrin-  
kle, or any such Thing*: And altho' it does not yet ap-  
pear what the Believer in Christ will be, yet we are  
assured of a Likeness to him, 1 John iii. 2. And the  
Spirit describes the Church as *glorious within* already,  
as having a Conformity in Part to him; as being,  
tho' invisibly, in Union with him; and as being belo-  
ved, washed, and inhabited by him, washed in his Blood,



and inhabited by his Spirit, *John xv. 5. Eph. iii. 17. Col. i. 27.*——Which is Christ in you the Hope of Glory  
*7thly*, If a Man's using the Law unlawfully, make that which is good in itself, bad to him, as exposing him to the Penalty; 'Tis yet a more lamentable Case when a Church or Nation do so, or when a Society do so, whether Civil or Sacred, greater or less; because their Influence and Power is usually greater than that of a particular Man in a private Station of Life: Their Example is more infecting, the Injury is more universal, and the Guilt more aggravated.

*8thly*, If the Divine Law, which is *holy, just and good*, may be eventually abused, or happen to be unlawfully used; then, what a Misery is it to Mankind when Iniquity is established by a Law, or committed by a Decision form'd upon it?

(1.) When Iniquity is established by a Law, such an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit; It is one of the greatest Evils under the Sun, being Iniquity in Practice on the Part of the Legislators, and Iniquity delivered in Precept or Command to those to whom such a Law is directed, or on whom it is imposed. It is an aggravated Sin to teach Iniquity by Doctrine or Example, 'tis yet worse to command it: For he who commands to do Iniquity or Injustice, both commits it and recommends it; and, under a Pretence of Equity or Goodness, does what he can to compel Men to it. This was the infamous Character of *Jeroboam*, That he made Israel to sin; and of *Nebucabnezzar*, in the Law of worshipping the Golden Image; and of *Pharaoh*, in the Law of drowning the Male-children. And, seeing bad Laws are so defaming to States, let all take Care not to commit such Iniquity, who are Overseers of a Church.

From the Justness of the last Consequence, it follows, That, if a King or any of his Royal Predecessors, if a Church or Commonwealth, if any Legislator or Legislature have at any Time made bad Laws, the best Use that can be made of them is, to repeal them, rescind or abrogate them; for Experience shows, that such

such Laws do leave a Cloud and Darkneſs upon the Year that gave them Birth ; and conſequently a Light ſhines upon the Memory of that Period at which they were aboliſhed by a Repeal.

(2.) When Iniquity is eſtabliſhed by a Law, the Effect is, Iniquity committed by Deceiſions; and that again is followed with unjuſt Suits or Claims, when Men imagine they can make any Benefit by ſuch a Law in a Way of Declarator or new Deciſion ; for, to have apparent Authority on One's Side in ſinning, becomes an Incentive and ſtrong Temptation to ſin.

I may conclude this with a Reflection on two Sayings of *Seneca's*.

The one was in a Way of Complaint or Regret, *That, in his Day, a Man might be robb'd on the Bench, as readily as on the High-way.*

The ſecond was, *That the Corruption of the preſent Times or Age, is the general Complaint of all Times, or every Age.*

The one of theſe Sayings is a lively Expreſſion of the Calamity of a People when Injuſtice prevails, or, as the Prophet has it, when *Truth is fallen in the Street, and Equity cannot enter, Iſa. lix. 14.*

The other Saying expreſſes how ſmartful and painful a Senſe, Injuſtice, Corruption and Degeneracy of Manners gives to Mankind, and how much abounding Iniquity makes Men complain of one another ; but particularly, judicial Injuries make a National Outcry, when the *Law is not uſed lawfully.*

But I am not of an Opinion with that Philoſopher, when he ſeems to think, That the Wickedneſs of the World is always the ſame in Degree; holding it, on the Matter, as balanced by an Equality of Increate and Decrease in different Places.

So, having done for the Time with that Moralift, I go to conclude the Diſcourſe with the Advantage of an infinitely brighter Light, which ſhines in a dark Place, and ſhows us, That the old World waxed worſe and worſe, till the Flood came: That the Iniquity of the *Amorites waxed greater and greater, till it was full :*

That the present Generation has its Iniquities aggravated with an Abuse of all the Long-suffering of God to Mankind in former Ages, upon the one Hand; and also with a Neglect of the former Warnings given them by the Rod, on the other Hand.

As also it notifies that a Scarcity or Penury of Faith, the Fewness of Believers, the Multitude of Infidels, the Hardness of Mens Hearts, and an universal Forgetfulness of God, will, in the last Age, put an End to the World, and, in a Way of Provocation, bring on the Judgment of the great Day, *Matth. xxiv. 38, 39. Luke xviii. 8.*

And the Apostle *Paul*, by his Example, has taught Men to acknowledge themselves the chief of Sinners: And, as we are chief Sinners, may Grace be given us to flee to the only and allsufficient Saviour, for the Benefit of his Righteousness; and, for the Sake thereof, may the Lord blot out the Iniquity of our Land in one Day.

Unto the one Lawgiver, and to the one Mediator between God and Men, and to the Holy Ghost the Comforter, in the Unity of the Godhead, be Honour, Blessing and Praise, Adoration and Thanksgiving, in the Church for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.



Page 39. Line last, for *Athentan*, read of *Rhodes*,

